

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

MAY 2014

THE INTERVIEW:
ZAPPOS CEO
TONY HSIEH

JET-SET
TRAVEL GUIDE

RUSSIAN CYBER-
CRIME SLEUTHS

THE WORLD'S
MOST PUNISHING
HORSE RACE

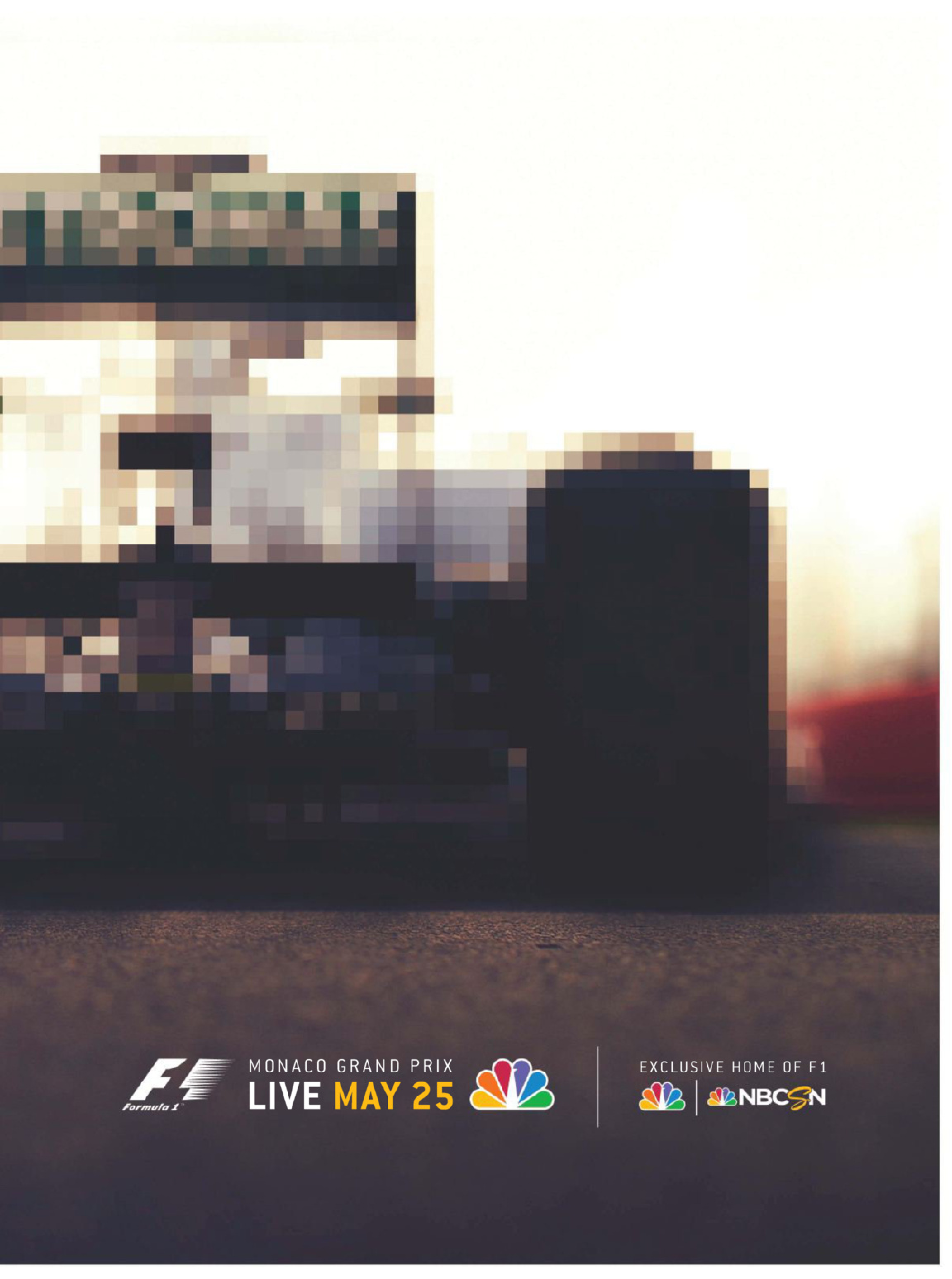
KATE MARA 20Q

NEW FICTION FROM
DON WINSLOW



A close-up, low-angle shot of a woman's legs from the knees down, wearing black high-heeled platform shoes. She is standing on a dark, textured surface, likely a racetrack. The background is blurred, showing a red and white barrier and a crowd of spectators in the distance. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting a sunset or sunrise setting. The overall composition is elegant and sophisticated, contrasting the glamour of high fashion with the gritty environment of a racetrack.

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PLAYBILL

How do you prefer your high? The sting of a well-aged whiskey after a hard-fought week, the explosion of sweat and blood when an uppercut connects, the sight of an exotic shoreline, the scent of a beautiful woman? True intoxication is something you earn. Consider this issue your game plan. Those who need a harder hit will identify with the adrenaline junkies in **Don Winslow's** *Extreme*, the first gut-punching installment of a three-part fiction serial in which thrill-seeking athletes live and die by the rip of a parachute cord (part two appears next month). If exploring uncharted realms is more your speed, check out *Flight Plan*, in which **Pavia Rosati** and **Jeralyn Gerba** uncover the last vestiges of tourist-free travel. Learn to smuggle exotic foods, kill jet lag and pick up locals like a local. Sometimes great natural beauty is no farther away than your couch—actress **Kate Mara** reveals in *20Q* how she balances her “nice girl” nature with errant roles on *House of Cards* and in *Transcendence*.

From a talented woman we turn to the plight of man, as seen by author **Ishmael Reed** in *Forum*. Reed maintains that those who lambaste the male gender aren't thinking it all the way through. Life is peachy, however, for an emerging mob of Russian cyber-criminals. In *From Russia With Code*, journalist **Sarah A. Topol** explores how cheap software and nonexistent law enforcement have created the next generation of hacker heists—easier to pull off than you think—with multimillionaires bragging about their exploits online while ruining American lives. **Sean Manning**

then takes us to Uruguay to witness the oldest and most dangerous endurance horse race in the world. As Manning puts it in *They Call It El Raid*, “It's part Kentucky Derby, part Daytona 500, a chaotic mash-up of *Seabiscuit* and *Mad Max*.” Award-winning photojournalist **Luiz Maximiano** captures the pandemonium of the race in phenomenal pictures. Here's another tough sport: boxing. **Eric Raskin** argues that ever since Tyson vs. Holyfield, the sweet science has lost its cultural traction. He explains the reasons for its downfall in *Down for the Count*. Imagine working in an office where Garth Brooks drops by to deliver 400 pizzas, you're encouraged to take 10-hour phone calls and having fun is a codified corporate value. In **Tony Hsieh's** world, it's all business as usual. The Zappos CEO explains in our *Playboy Interview* how he plans to revitalize downtown Las Vegas and change the nature of business itself. Our most intoxicating issue yet awaits, just beyond this page. Time to drink it all in—you've earned it.



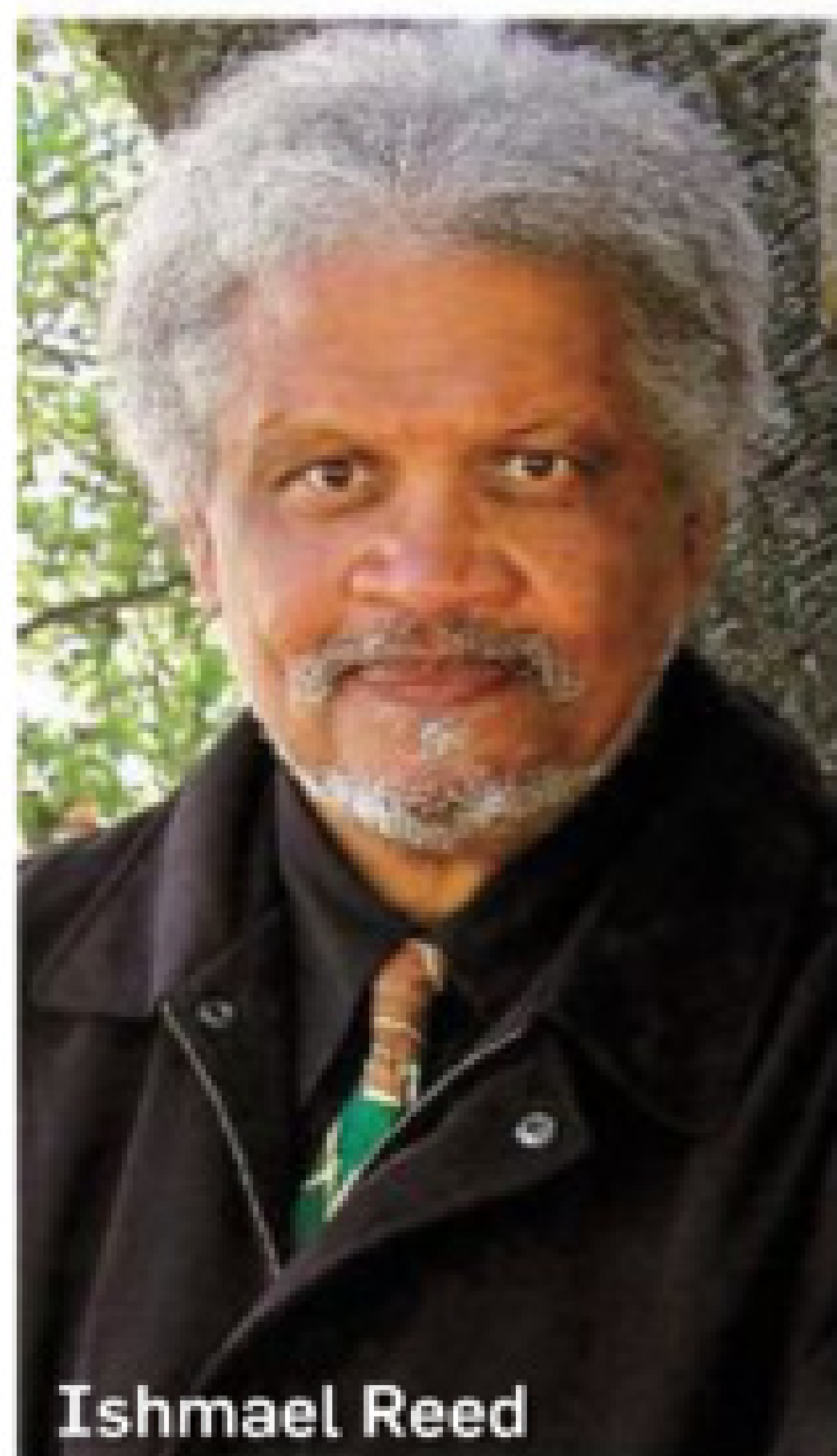
Don Winslow



Pavia Rosati



Jeralyn Gerba



Ishmael Reed



Eric Raskin



Kate Mara



Sarah A. Topol



Luiz Maximiano



Sean Manning



Tony Hsieh

There is
some **thing**
within us all.

Josh Hartnett Timothy Dalton and Eva Green

PENNY DREADFUL

SERIES PREMIERE **MAY 11** | **SUNDAYS 10pm** ET/PT **SHOWTIME**
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A promotional poster for the television series "Penny Dreadful". The central figure is actress Eva Green, who has dark, curly hair and blue eyes, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. She is wearing a dark, ornate necklace made of many small scorpions, with one larger scorpion hanging from the center. A single drop of red liquid is falling from its stinger onto her chest. She is also wearing a dark, draped garment with intricate lace or beadwork on the shoulders. The background is a dark, textured grey.

There is
some thing
within us all.

Josh Hartnett Timothy Dalton and Eva Green

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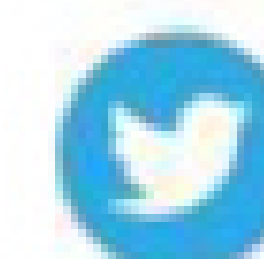
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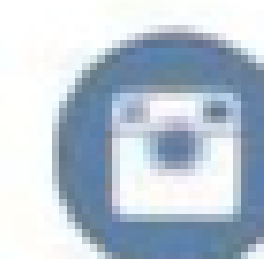
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MR. PLAYBOY MEETS MR. INTERNATIONAL

Pitbull, also known as Mr. 305, was in the 310 for Hef to welcome him as Playboy's new artist in residence. While on the Mansion grounds the Miami-born rapper shot the music video for "Wild Wild Love" with Playmates Jaclyn Swedberg, Raquel Pomplun and Gemma Lee Farrell. A sample lyric from the track: "Ladies and gentlemen, you're looking at the new playboy."



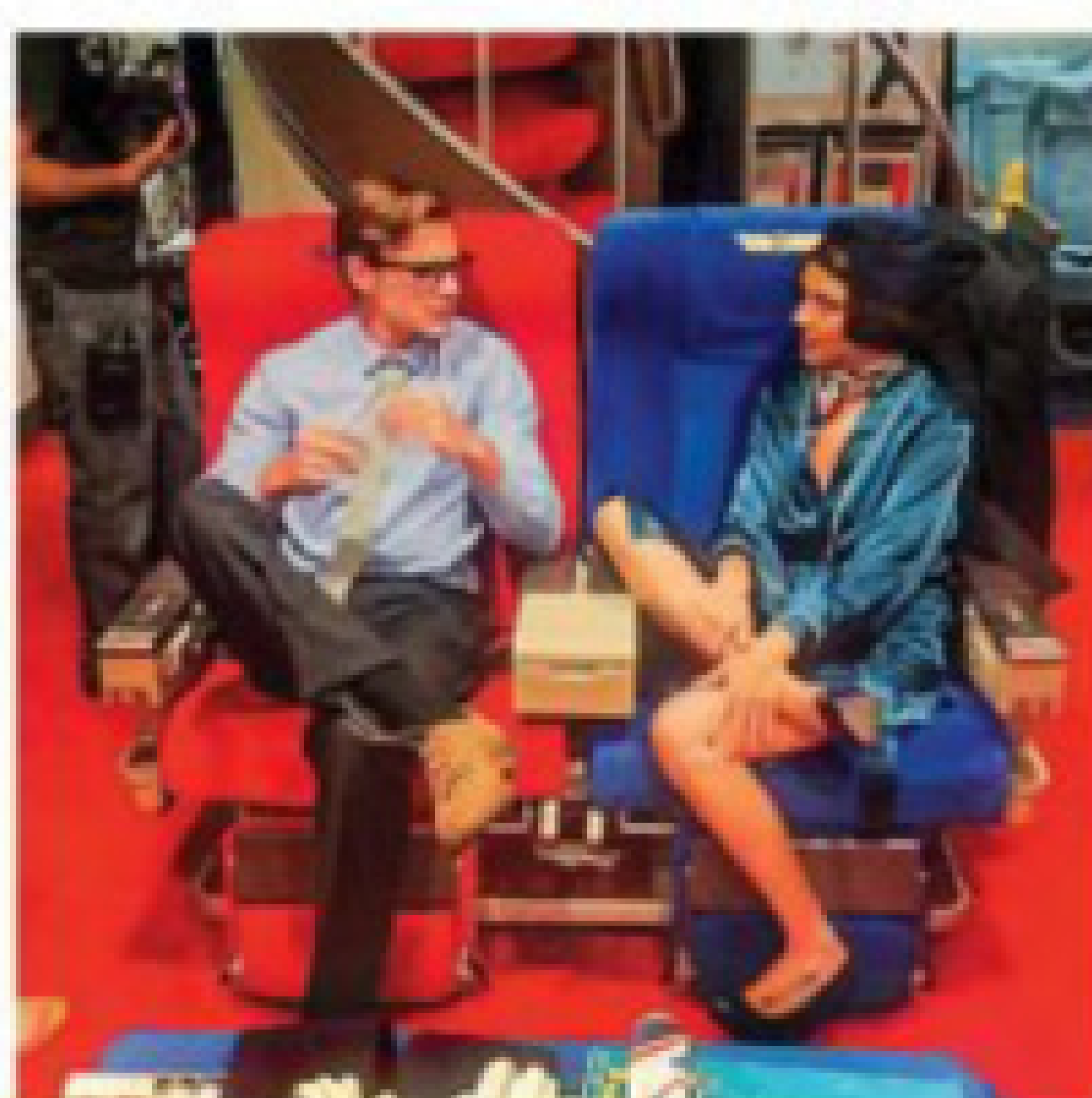
SUPREME REMIXES THE RABBIT

Playboy and cool-kid clothier Supreme joined forces to launch a Supreme x Playboy spring-summer 2014 capsule collection. Among the offerings are a hooded leather jacket, an array of football jerseys and shoes by Vans. Five minutes after the kicks were posted to Supreme's website they sold out.



HAROLD RAMIS 1944-2014

The world got less funny this February with the passing of Harold Ramis. The comedic genius behind *Animal House*, *Caddyshack* and *Ghostbusters* honed his wit at PLAYBOY as an associate editor working on *Party Jokes* in the 1970s. "The editors wanted to modernize the jokes a bit, to make them more counterculture," he said in an interview. "A big part of my job was changing 'the farmer' into 'a swinging advertising executive.'"



THE VERY FRIENDLY SKIES

The thought behind this month's classy cover was to fly you back to the golden age of aviation. Photographer Tony Kelly brought Miss February 2014 Amanda Booth to a former Air Force base in Victorville, California that now serves as an airplane boneyard. Amanda looks like a glamorous pinup who came alive and jumped off the nose of a World War II bomber.



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MURDER TRIAL UPDATE

Vince Beiser's article on prescription-painkiller use in War, West Virginia (*Prescription for Death*, March) illuminates the severe drug issues in the area, but the case also speaks to the larger national problems in the pharmaceutical industry and the justice system. It is upsetting to hear about lives destroyed by substance abuse, in this instance spanning generations of a single family. I hope for the best for all involved, particularly the young son. Are there any updates on the murder trial?

Marianne Eagan
Los Angeles, California

Becky Hatcher was acquitted of the murder of her father-in-law, Tom Hatcher. Her brother, Earl Click, was found guilty of first-degree murder and conspiracy and sentenced to life in prison. Click, 27, said he was sorry for the victim's family and thanked the court for giving him a fair trial. However, the judge cautioned Click that thanking him for a fair trial might hurt his chances of appeal, so Click took it back.

CHECKING IN ON GAWKER BOSS

The best thing about Gawker has been its ferocious independence and transparency, with Nick Denton (*Playboy Interview*, March) leading that charge, even if it created chaos within his own system. That's an admirable position and one not many of his fellow moguls can claim. However, hypocrisy is the number one transparency killer, and when I heard about the intern lawsuit at Gawker, the walls of admiration and respect started to crumble. If Gawker can't carry that mantle, who can?

Via the internet

Denton is an incredibly intelligent and spot-on thinker. He seems far more focused than any of the contemporary heroes he mentions. Frankly, your interview is the most compelling thing I have read in a long time. Denton is either a powerful futurist or the product of one scary alien hive-mind.

Via the internet

WHERE THERE'S A WILL(IE)...

In the interesting article "Beyond Condoms" (*After Hours, Talk*, March), one of the condoms mentioned contains graphene, which is "more than 200 times stronger than steel." One of my longtime fantasies involves fully inserting my member into a vagina and then walking around the room, supporting my partner without using our hands, arms or her legs for support. Instead, we would rely exclusively on the strength of my willie. Do you think this super-strength condom would help me reach my long-cherished goal?

Lanny Middings
San Ramon, California

We don't have a structural engineering degree, but give it a try and let us know how it goes.

DEAR PLAYBOY

Miss March Wins Hearts

On behalf of all beautiful women who have short or alternative hairstyles, thank you for Miss March Britt Linn.

Lexi Moscovitch
Montreal, Quebec

I was intrigued by the statement that Miss March Britt Linn is the first short-haired Playmate in more than 15 years. You neglected to mention the one before her. Who was she?

Jason Laroe
St. Albans, Vermont

Before Britt, the most recent comparably short-haired Playmate was Miss July 1997 Daphnee Lynn Duplaix, and before Daphnee was Miss July 1984 Liz Stewart.

As a 31-year-old gay male reader, I'm thrilled to see PLAYBOY breaking the mold. I regard Playmates as works of art, not just objects of



sexual desire. I am mesmerized by Britt Linn's Centerfold. She has my vote for 2015 Playmate of the Year.

Josh Fehrens
Toronto, Ontario

ROCK AND ROLL REBORN

As I read Rick Moody's eloquent essay on the passing of the rock icon (*In Search of the Lost Rock & Roll Icon*, January/February), I was struck by the familiarity of the words. We've heard it all before. Is there any way rock can survive the most recent virus to infect it? Rock and roll is a living entity born of the souls of creative individuals, and anytime those souls are confiscated by profiteers there will be a visceral reaction. We will survive the downfall. The drive of the creative spirit refuses to be strangled by the hands of profit and bad taste. If you put your ear to the rail, you can already hear the rumbling. History tells us that something amazing is just around the corner.

Benjamin Barrett
Santa Barbara, California

CALLING ALL CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS

In *What Is a Brand?* (January/February) Slavoj Žižek reduces all consumer impulses to a desire for an ultimately meaningless individualistic notion of authenticity, albeit one with a social character. Žižek's examples (rotten organic fruit, Starbucks, Coke) reinforce a banal notion of authenticity, but the essay hardly addresses social consumerism that is also consumer advocacy or (even better) labor activism. Buying a T-shirt from a company or a country with labor standards may make me feel good, but it can also support those workers and working conditions in general. The real question is, short of

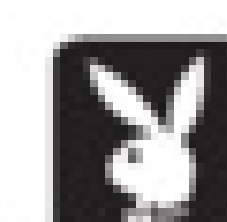
hoping for a real socialist revolution, can we consume in a way that also produces positive social change?

Clement Clarke
Los Angeles, California

GOTTFRIED'S MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Gilbert, I've had the good fortune of being your acquaintance for almost two decades, and I consider myself the better for it. I'm writing in response to your PLAYBOY essay *I Want a Guy With a Sense of Humor* (January/February). It was smart and funny and true. I've long thought that when women and men claim that the trait they most desire in a mate is a sense of humor, what they really mean is they want their partner to laugh at all their pathetic attempts at being funny. They want a raucous audience with the bar for jokes set so low it's nearly invisible. However, I feel your article needs an addendum—something like "This article is applicable to everyone except Nikki Cox." Whenever I have fallen in love, it has always been with men who paid their bills by making people laugh. The love of my life—my husband, Jay Mohr—makes me laugh harder than I ever thought possible. Gilbert, you have always made me laugh. If I were single and you asked me out, I would say, without hesitation, "Absolutely."

Nikki Cox
Los Angeles, California

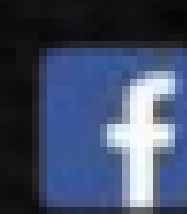
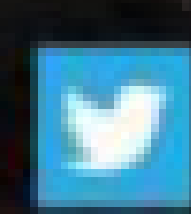




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BECOMING ATTRACTION

ALISSA BOURNE

• *"I LIKE BEING the bombshell, but I'm still bashful,"* says Alissa Bourne, a model turned actress who can be seen alongside Cameron Diaz in *The Other Woman*. A former Division I soccer player at the University of Maryland, Alissa smolders in front of the camera and in uniform on the soccer field. "I've been told I have soft features, and my body feels best after I've showered off the sweat," she says. Game on.



DOWN FOR THE COUNT

WHAT KILLED THE AMERICAN HEAVYWEIGHT BOXER?

The damage to Evander Holyfield was easily surveyed. Blood streamed down his neck and onto his shoulder, where it mixed with sweat. Somewhere on the canvas at the MGM Grand Casino lay a bloody hunk of his ear. The ear could be fixed. The damage to heavyweight boxing would prove more complicated.

Seventeen years removed from “the Bite Fight,” which ended with Mike Tyson being disqualified in the third round after his second taste-

testing of Holyfield’s ear, what was once the most prestigious individual title in all of sports—the heavyweight championship of the world—barely registers with American sports fans. The current champ is Ukrainian Wladimir Klitschko, who has been recognized as the top heavyweight for the past eight years but is best known to mainstream America as the towering fiancé of actress Hayden Panettiere. Only two of his last eight title defenses have been televised in the U.S. on HBO; the others have been relegated to upstart network Epix or internet streams such

as ESPN3.com. On April 26, Klitschko faces Samoan Alex Leapai, his most anonymous challenger yet.

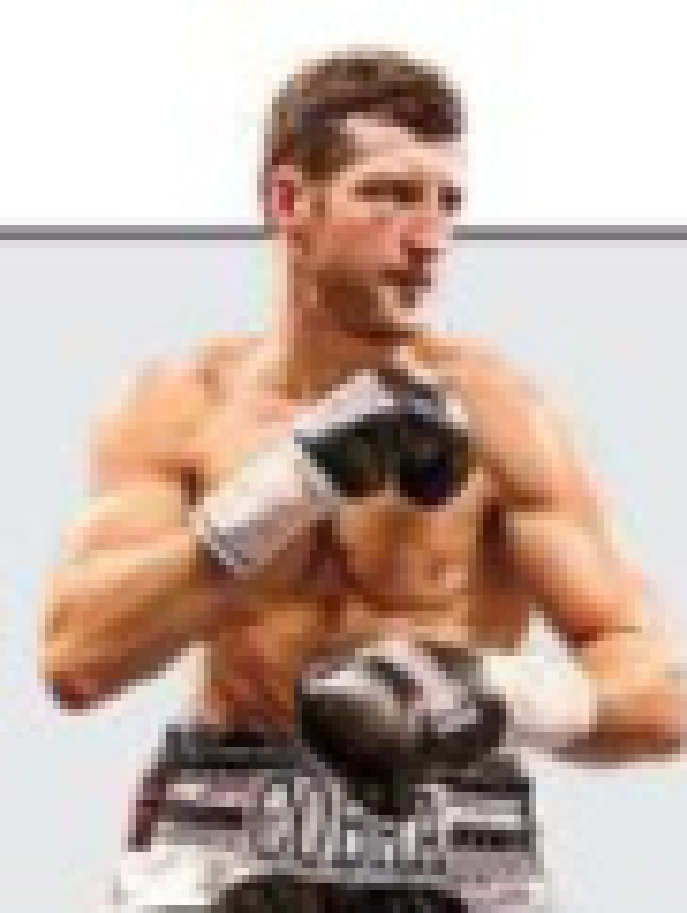
How did heavyweight boxing, which dominated the country for the better part of a century, end up flat on its back? Although viewers were obviously turned off by Tyson’s hijinks, that incident is hardly to blame. The fight itself was more of a tipping point: It was the last fight that truly mattered between two American heavyweights. In reality, the death of the American heavyweight has multiple causes. Start with boxing’s transition from mainstream to cult sport due to a traffic jam of sanctioning bodies handing out titles and making it tough for fans to know or care who is the current “world champion.” Add the migration of the biggest fights to pricey pay-per-view events and the rise of mixed-martial-arts promoters who do a better job targeting young viewers. Then consider Muhammad Ali’s post-career physical condition as a compelling argument against athletes donning gloves. America’s heavyweights, at least those who were left, were finally wiped out by Englishman Lennox Lewis.

Today, the Klitschkos—Wladimir and his brother Vitali—continue to suck the life out of the post-Lewis heavyweight division with their cautious, awkward fighting styles. Two-time heavyweight champ George Foreman, who fought in both the golden age of the 1970s and the silver age of the 1990s, sees the brothers’ lack of razzle-dazzle in the ring as only half their problem. “There’s nothing front-page about them,” Foreman says. “There’s not one quote. Ali said, ‘I am the greatest.’ Tyson made the statement ‘I’m the baddest man on the planet.’ There’s nothing like that coming from the Klitschkos.”

Wladimir Klitschko, with his doctorate in sports science and numerous humanitarian causes, isn’t the type to bite an opponent’s ear. The sad truth, however, is this: Heavyweight boxing might be better off if he were.—*Eric Raskin*

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

THREE SHOWDOWNS TO LOOK FORWARD TO UNTIL THE HEAVYWEIGHTS GET UP OFF THE MAT



Carl Froch

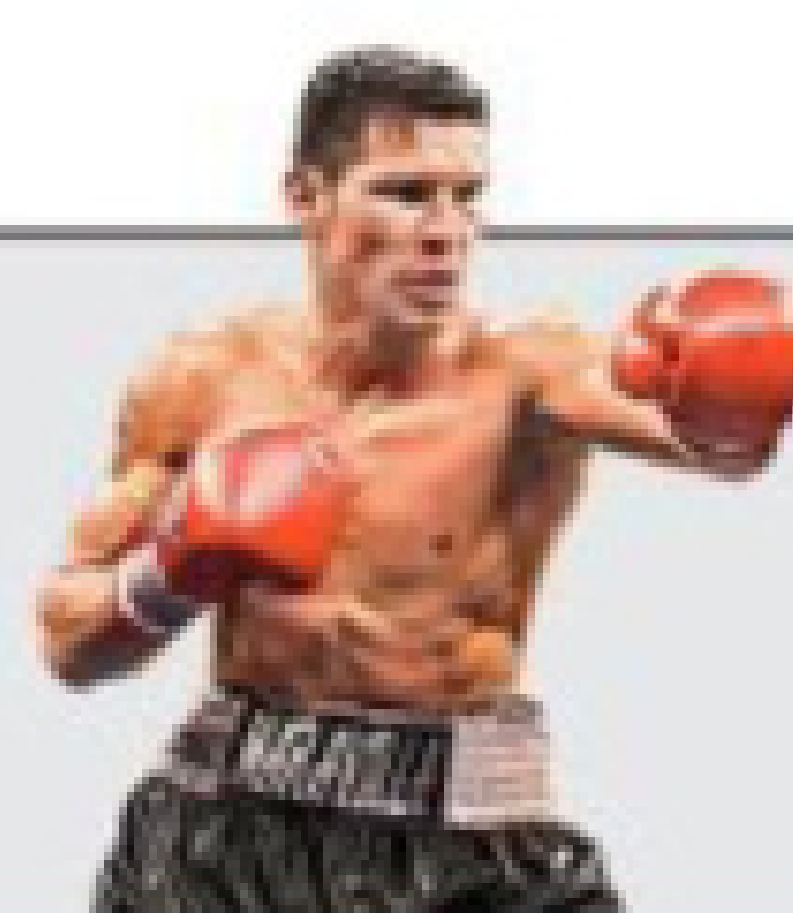
VS.



George Groves

May 31

→ Groves looks for revenge after the previous bout between these two British super middleweights was controversially halted.



Sergio Martinez

VS.



Miguel Cotto

June 7

→ Cotto challenges for the middleweight throne at Madison Square Garden. Incredible atmosphere and a fight that might live up to it.



Yuriorkis Gamboa

VS.



Mikey Garcia

Date TBD

→ Two unbeaten junior lightweights on a collision course—each with one-punch power and the chins to go down at any time.



Wingsuit jump
from 30,000 feet
above the Swiss
Alps in 2010.



PLAYBOY: When did you first conceive of this jump?

OGWYN: Five years ago. Wingsuits have evolved since then, enabling me to go twice as far and fast, which makes a jump like this possible. I've been flying off and around mountains for years, and for a time I was one of the only guys doing it. I still really am, and nobody's thought much of it. They will now.

PLAYBOY: What are the dangers?

OGWYN: It's my first speed descent down a mountain, which brings a range of risks. I'm keeping the accessories I'll be using to do it secret, and the suit is completely customized for the jump. But honestly, Everest is still a really dangerous mountain. There are 50 different ways to die, and you have to get up there just to take that leap.

PLAYBOY: What does it feel like to jump off a mountain?

OGWYN: It's a beautiful feeling, an elegant, acrobatic move that involves years of training. To me, approaching the edge of things is over. Now it's about having a story, a point and a powerful experience, not just being radical. I'm not the Red Bull guy. I'm the complete opposite of that—the thinking man's stuntman.

PLAYBOY: What's the most triumphant moment of your career?

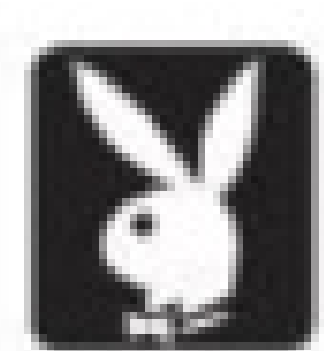
OGWYN: We filmed a wingsuit scene on the Eiger for *After Earth*, and I flew through a notch in the mountain. It had never been done before. They didn't think we could do it. It is the most technical flight you can attempt. It goes to show a little guy from Louisiana can do some pretty neat stuff if he puts his mind to it.

Q+A

JOBY OGWYN

THE FASTEST AMERICAN TO SUMMIT EVEREST PLANS TO LEAP FROM THE TOP. WE HAD TO ASK WHY

• Joby Ogwyn's unbruised face doesn't exactly scream "the next Evel Knievel," but the daredevil has been setting records on the world's most treacherous peaks since the age of 18. This month he'll attempt a historic, death-defying and downright crazy wingsuit leap from the summit of Mount Everest in a live broadcast on Discovery Channel. "It's not about the danger; it's about the beauty," says the 39-year-old. Easy to say when you're not looking down on 29,035 feet of ice.—Tyler Trykowski



CUDDLING WITH CONTROVERSY

A PROFESSIONAL SNUGGLER FINDS HERSELF IN BED WITH TROUBLE



Do men really crave more snuggling? Yes, says Jacqueline Samuel, and they're willing to pay for it. Samuel is the founder of the Snuggery, a start-up in the suburbs of Rochester, New York where clients—mostly men—drop \$60 to snuggle for an hour. Samuel also offers a \$120 “double cuddle,” which lets you spend an hour gently sandwiched between Samuel and her sidekick, Colleen.

Touting the physical and psychological benefits of “nonsexual touch,” Samuel emphasizes that “just snuggling” means just that. Sexual arousal is an occupational hazard, she says, but it's surprisingly rare. Controversy is a bigger problem. Although Samuel has consistently explained that sexual activity is not part of the package, neighbors still petitioned to shut the Snuggery down.

“They thought clients would be sex offenders,” Samuel explains. “They set up surveillance cameras and said what I was doing was prostitution.

They wanted undercover cops to come in.” She pauses and laughs. “Imagine—undercover cuddlers.”

Nosy neighbors weren't the only problem. The publicity got her “kicked out” of Nazareth College, where she was close to earning a graduate degree in social work. Samuel claims that college officials said her profession would deter social-service agencies from hiring her for a required internship. She was also told “full disclosure” required that she include snuggling on her résumé. Samuel says she appealed to three levels of college administrators without success. (A Nazareth spokesperson stated, “The college is not able to comment on the story.”)

With the Snuggery now settled in a more remote, low-key location, all the fuss still befuddles Samuel. A pretty and petite brunette who is pictured in a lacy white dress on her website, she says she has always been more comfortable communicating and connecting through touch. Since the Snuggery opened, she has snuggled with hun-

dreds of clients, many of them married middle-aged men starved for affection.

Samuel says that while clients have respected her rule that snuggles are not foreplay, men occasionally desire a deeper emotional relationship. “There have been a few times I've had to terminate the relationship with a client because they were hoping for something that was deeper than just snuggling,” she says.

Once snuggling up to 14 hours a day, Samuel has since cut back, snuggling only with a core group of regulars and rarely taking on new clients. She is focused on training and hiring new cuddlers, having recently added another to her crew, and still hopes to one day finish her master's degree. In the meantime she vows to remain an advocate for the benefits—and acceptance—of therapeutic snuggles.

As she wrote in a blog entry not long after the Snuggery's opening, “Today, I snuggled. It was great. I'm living my own version of the American dream.” —*Scott Westcott*

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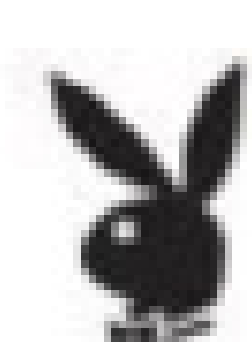
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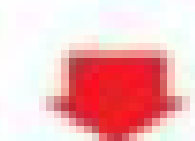
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 **TASCHEN**

HOT SHOTS

DROP THE LEMON DROP. THESE TOP-SHELF SHOTS ARE GOOD ENOUGH TO SIP

• While mixology has immeasurably improved happy hour, the shooter remains a neglected outpost of the cocktail kingdom. If you're going to the trouble of actually mixing a shot instead of tossing back some bourbon neat, do yourself a favor and use the best booze you can get your hands on. The trick is to balance something sweet with something strong. Here are six upgraded shooters to get your night started.



SHOT CLOCK

To mix up a round of these drinks for your guests, quadruple the measurements and make in batches of four.



1. Testa Rossa

→ If you're a fan of that bracing and bitter cocktail called the negroni, you'll like this Italianate shot that includes the aperitif Campari.

- 1 oz. Campari
- 1 oz. grappa

Combine ingredients in a mixing glass filled with ice. Stir and strain into a two-ounce shot glass.



2. Black Eye

→ Think of this shot as a sugar-free take on Irish coffee—and a super-speedy replacement for the disco nap.

- 1 oz. cold coffee
- 1 oz. Irish whiskey

Combine ingredients in a mixing glass filled with ice. Stir and strain into a two-ounce shot glass.



3. Smoke Out

→ Full-flavored Mexican mezcal makes this drink a smoky spin on the margarita.

- 1 oz. mezcal
- ½ oz. simple syrup
- ½ oz. fresh lime juice

Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake and strain into a two-ounce shot glass.



4. Orange Alert

→ Old-school gin and juice is improved with the addition of aromatic, high-octane, 100-proof navy-strength gin.

- 1 oz. navy-strength gin
- 1 oz. orange juice

Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake and strain into a two-ounce shot glass.



5. Zoo York

→ The potent rye whiskey in this shot turns it into a tiny but tough variation on a manhattan.

- 1 oz. 100-proof rye whiskey
- ½ oz. sweet vermouth

Combine ingredients in a mixing glass filled with ice. Stir and strain into a two-ounce shot glass.



6. Dirty Monk

→ Chartreuse made by monks in France adds an herbaceous sweetness to this spicy shot.

- 1 oz. Chartreuse
- 1 oz. pepper vodka

Combine ingredients in a mixing glass filled with ice. Stir and strain into a two-ounce shot glass.

Miller

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YOUR FORTUNE AWAITS.



**COUTURE KICKS**

→ Common Projects and Belgian designer Tim Coppens teamed up on these bold slip-ons. \$575, mrporter.com



VANS, MAN

CLASSIC OR CURRENT, THE QUINTESSENTIAL SKATER SHOE IS COOLER THAN EVER

• When southern California shoe company Vans released its first waffle-soled sneakers, skateboarders snapped them up: They were rugged, cheap and low-key cool. And they still are (a basic pair runs around \$45). But that hasn't kept fashion houses from Gucci to Givenchy from producing similar slip-ons for more than 10 times the price in high-end fabrics and leathers. As sleek and stylish as they are, we'd rather spend our money on a closetful of the classic.

NEW
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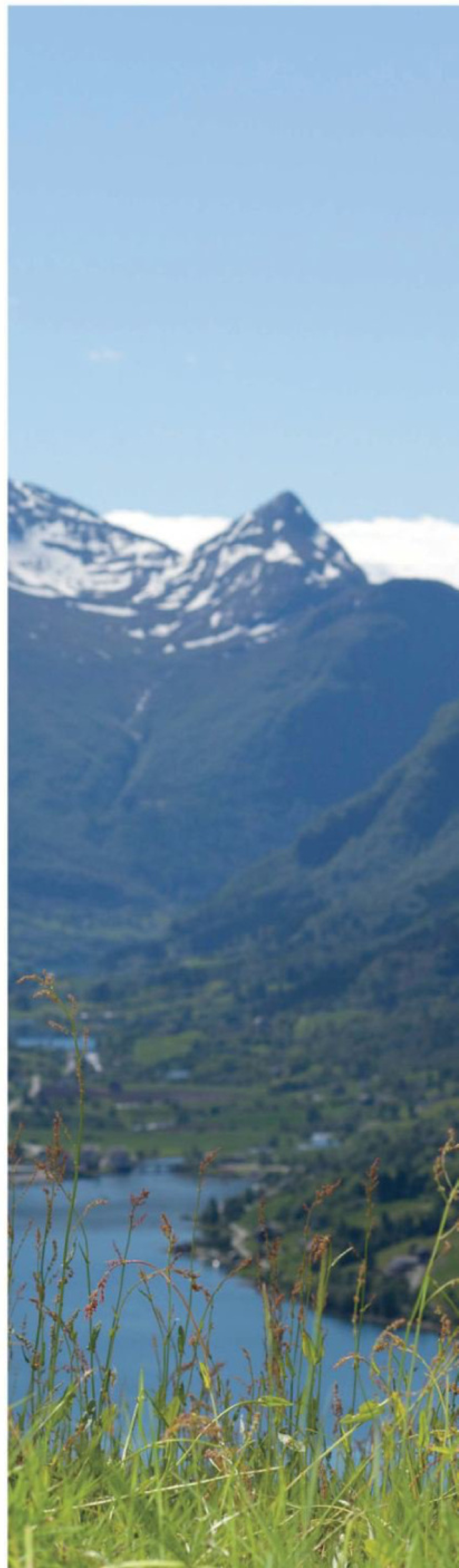
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SPRING FLINGS

FAST, SMART AND STYLISH: THIS MONTH'S FAVORITE TEST-DRIVES

2015 SUBARU WRX

★★★★

→ We have a list of reasons to love Subaru's WRX—most of them involve horsepower. It's an off-road rally car for weekend warriors, a daily commuter with a load of interior room and an all-wheel-drive ass-kicker that can tackle any weather. Plus, it does it all with a base price of \$27K, providing an insanely impressive fun-per-dollar ratio. Its 268 horsepower feels like twice that much, and a six-speed manual comes standard. The interior is all business, appropriate for the driver who's in it for thrills and not for status. For an extra \$8K, upgrade to the WRX STI—supercar action without the supercar price tag.



WRX

Stands for World Rally racing and (the X) for all-wheel drive.

REMIX

Slightly reshaped, the trademark WRX hood scoop remains.

INTERIOR

Upgraded seat comfort and a six-speed manual shifter.

2015 Subaru WRX

- Engine: two-liter turbo boxer four
- Horsepower: 268
- Torque: 258 foot-pounds
- 0-60 mph: five seconds
- MPG: 21 city/28 highway
- Price tag: \$27,000



2014 AUDI Q5 TDI

★★★

→ The luxury-crossover category is a traffic jam of hot cars. Here's one reason to go with the Q5: the new clean-diesel three-liter V6 version. Bathe yourself in all that Audi interior awesomeness while spitting out fewer emissions and getting more torque and better mileage (31 mpg highway) than the gas-fed Q5. Tag: \$46,500.



2014 CHRYSLER 300C VARVATOS

★★½

→ Put an average dude in a finely tailored rock-star suit and his cred skyrockets, right? That's the idea behind the 300C John Varvatos Luxury Edition, with stitched leather interior, platinum-chrome mesh grille and 20-inch wheels. Under the hood: the usual 3.6-liter V6 (292 horsepower, 31 mpg highway). Tag: \$41,415.



2014 PORSCHE PANAMERA 4S

★★★★

→ Since its launch in 2009, the Panamera has outrun all expectations. For 2014, Porsche has redeveloped its engines, adding more power. The 4S (for all-wheel drive and sport, of course) now pumps 420 horsepower from a twin-turbo three-liter V6. Comfortable enough for road trips, fast enough to top 175 mph. Tag: \$98,300.



FAST BALLER

Behind the wheel with C.J. Wilson, major league baseball's biggest gearhead

Q: You're a pitcher for the Los Angeles Angels with a 73-52 career record, and yet you're obsessed with cars and racing. What's in your garage right now?

A: A Porsche Carrera GT, a BMW S1000RR sport bike and a McLaren MP4-12C. I'm getting a McLaren P1 hybrid supercar soon. That car is so scientifically advanced, it would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

Q: Tell us about C.J. Wilson Racing.

A: I have a pair of race teams. My junior team competes in the BFGoodrich Mazda MX-5 Cup series, and my pro team races in the Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge. I've done lots of racing, but I can't drive now because of baseball.

Q: When you were a kid, what was your first aspiration: ballplayer or race driver?

A: My first dream was to be a fighter pilot, then a race car driver. My dad kept me realistic. Racing is too expensive, he told me. So baseball became the sole focus of my life for about a dozen years. Now here I am, loving both. I had to make a lot of hard choices and get a lot of breaks along the way.

WIZARDS OF OSLO

THE DAYS ARE LONG AND THE NIGHTS ARE HOT IN NORWAY'S COOL CAPITAL CITY



Norway's cosmopolitan capital, Oslo—one of the fastest-growing cities in Europe—is glamorous, famously pricey and literally buzzing with a new coffee obsession. Where it once lagged behind Scandinavian sister cities, Oslo is making up for lost time with fine art acquisitions, New Nordic cooking and shiny new architectural landmarks. Go in early summer, when the sun lingers late into the evening.

1. Culture Shopping

→ The trendy Tjuvholmen neighborhood (a.k.a. Thief Island), sitting on a peninsula that juts into the Oslo Fjord inlet, is an oasis of contemporary art and design on the newly revitalized waterfront. Renzo Piano designed the build-



B

ing that hosts the new district's pièce de résistance, **Astrup Fearnley Museet (A)**. Once centered on American art, its collection has transformed into an international who's-who of the modern art scene: Damien Hirst, Matthew Barney, Maurizio Cattelan, Takashi Murakami. Next door, the impeccably appointed boutique hotel the **Thief (B,C)**, opened by an art-collecting billionaire, showcases famous designers along with up-and-coming Norwegian talent—not to mention the views from room balconies that open up to the lapping waves of the Oslo Fjord.



C

2. Scandi Sampling

→ New Scandinavian cuisine collides with European market-hall tradition at Mathallen, where you weave your way through a series of high-end specialty shops, cafés and tasting stations to order baskets of *reker* (peel-and-eat shrimp) and bottles of microbrew. The much-lauded, Michelin-starred Maaemo has sprouted the casual restaurant **Koloni-hagen (D)** and, with its locally procured menu, more effortless Scandinavian minimalism—bare floorboards, bricks and bulbs. Locals gather at Pjøltergeist for Asian-Icelandic bites served on china bearing the Scandi cartoon character Mumin. Nummer 19



D

is the unequivocal cocktail spot for well-mixed drinks such as the inverted vesper. Pace yourself, though, as young Scandinavians drink like fish and the Norwegian currency (the krone) is going strong.



E



F

3. Roasting Frenzy

→ Blame the mid-night sun, but Oslo's inhabitants have coffee coursing through their veins. The 1960s-era coffee shop **Fuglen (E,F)** tipped off a *kaffe* frenzy when it was reimagined as a midcentury furniture store offering exquisite coffee by day and craft cocktails by night. Microroaster and former world barista champion Tim Wendelboe sources sustainable beans from all over the world and serves new flavor profiles at his slender espresso bar in Grünerløkka. The beautifully branded Jacu Coffee Roastery best expresses the New Nordic style of light roasts. Sample their smooth style at the coffee bar within Scotch & Soda, a super-cool retail shop in Aker Brygge. Order a short *kaffe* at Java Espresso Bar & Kaffe forretning and drink it black to get the jolt you need to power through the next 24 hours.

—Jeralyn Gerba



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MOVIE OF THE MONTH

GODZILLA

By Stephen Rebello



• Godzilla, the screen's most iconic, city-stomping, radioactive *kaiju*, has been waiting for a modern film worthy of his status since 1954's *Gojira*. After dozens of cheesy sequels and

a disastrous 1998 American redo, the King of the Monsters may reign again thanks to the megabucks reboot starring Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Bryan Cranston, Elizabeth Olsen and Juliette Binoche. "We wanted to give the audience thrills, suspense and goose bumps," says director Gareth Edwards. "Our movie definitely delivers on size and insane carnage, but it's important that it feels emotional as well as epic. We've harkened back to movies we grew up with, like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. So many films since then have gotten the spectacle right but without characters and journeys you care about. There will be moments when the real Godzilla will fist-punch the air."



MUTANT MANIA

X-Men: Days of Future Past scribe Simon Kinberg unites two X generations



Q: What hasn't been done in an X-Men movie that made you want to write this one?

A: Charles Xavier is such a beloved, perfect character in the comic and the movies. In this one, Wolverine goes back in time and meets the young Charles Xavier, whom we made a drug addict full of anguish, rage and hopelessness. That was a radical thing to do.

Q: Did you or director Bryan Singer come up with the idea to merge casts?

A: Bryan said, "What if you do a time-travel story?" I thought it was a good idea at first, but it seemed impossible to get all the casts together. Bryan was concerned about making sure the logic of the time-travel paradoxes lined up and made scientific sense.

Q: What's next for the mutants?

A: Moving forward, we'll most likely be following the *X-Men: First Class* story. At the end of *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, Jennifer Lawrence's Raven is the most unresolved character. Her soul is tipping in one direction or the other. In subsequent movies, there's more work we can do to explore her final choice.—S.R.



TEASE FRAME

Chasty Ballesteros

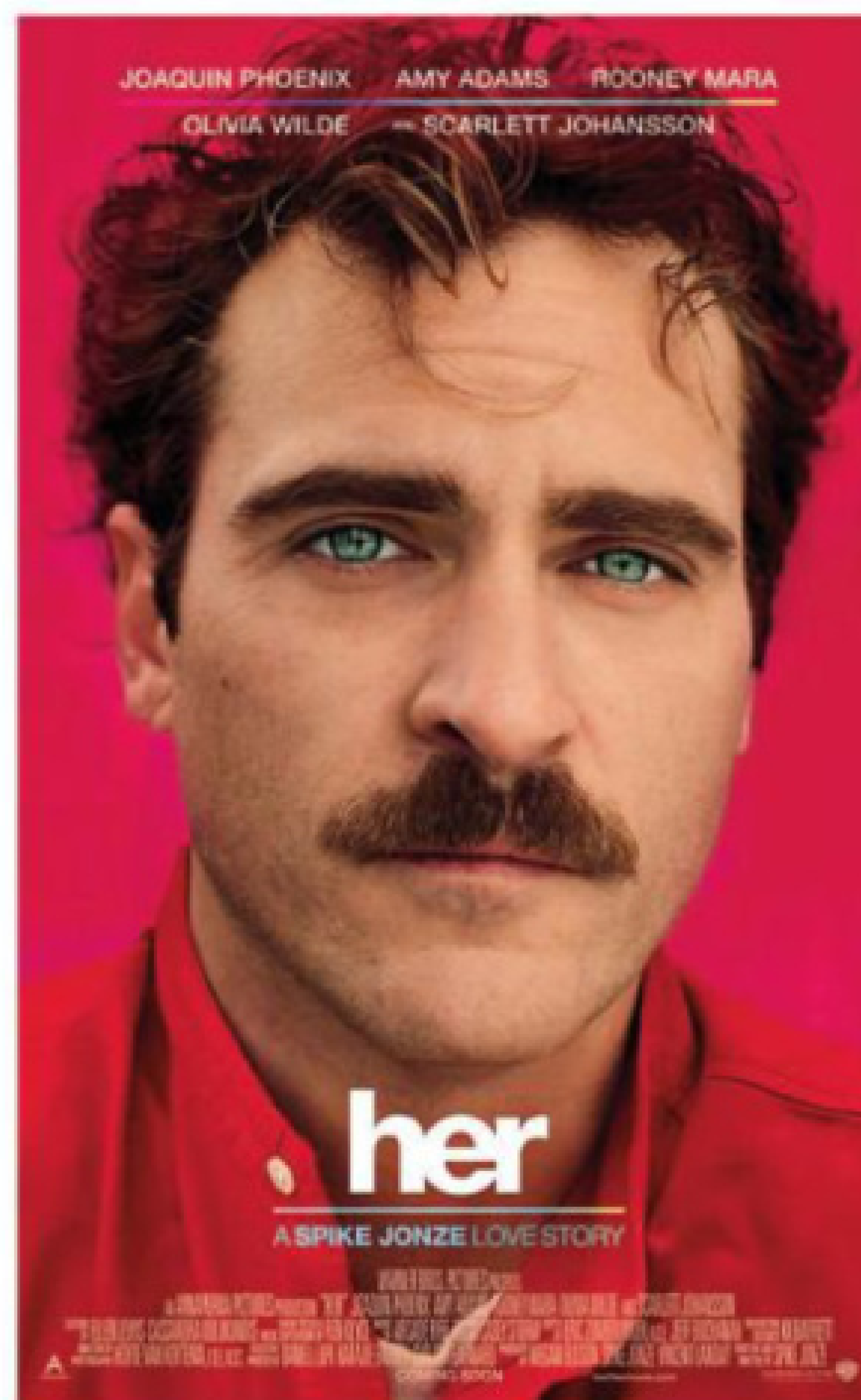
→ Chasty Ballesteros is a 33-year-old Canadian actress of Filipino descent who is fluent in the international language of lovemaking in the late-night Cinemax series *The Girl's Guide to Depravity* (pictured). See her next on the big screen opposite Seth Rogen and Zac Efron in the comedy *Neighbors*.

DVD OF THE MONTH

HER

By Stacie Houglund

• For a perfect allegory of our growing attachment to technology wrapped up in an old-fashioned love story, look no further than Spike Jonze's tragi-romance starring Joaquin Phoenix as a lonely writer living in near-future L.A. Socially awkward, with a Groucho mustache and a penchant for high-waisted pants, he interacts with women only through cybersex, meetings with his estranged wife (Rooney Mara) and the odd run-in with his ex-girlfriend (Amy Adams). So when he fires up his new operating system, Samantha (voiced by Scarlett Johansson), it's a husky breath of fresh air. She organizes his life, "gets" his weirdness and turns him on. It isn't long before he falls for her and she for him. Questions are raised: What will people think? Can you have sex? How do we define "love"? Making it work requires more than just a strong wi-fi connection. (BD) **Best extras:** several making-of featurettes. ★★★½



MUST-WATCH TV

24: LIVE ANOTHER DAY

By Josef Adalian

• Jack Bauer defeated death countless times during the eight-year run of *24*, so cheating cancellation? No biggie. As when we left him in 2010, our hero is a fugitive from the same government he once served. He has found refuge in London, but dogged CIA agent Kate Morgan (Yvonne Strahovski) is closing in. And then, as is always the case on *24*, the shit gets real. Further plot details are almost beside the point, since only two things matter: Will Jack find creative new ways to kill bad guys, and will Chloe return? The answer, on both counts, is yes. Go ahead and clear your Monday nights right now.



GAME OF THE MONTH

FIFA WORLD CUP

By Jason Buhrmester

• Sports and technology don't always play nicely with each other. Hockey's attempt at adding a digital "puck trail" to

TV broadcasts? Awful. This year's FIFA World Cup in Brazil will be the first to use a new chip-embedded ball and a goal-line sensor to confirm when a player scores. We have our doubts. Luckily, video games are one arena in which sports and technology always get along. Developers crammed 100 new animations into 2014

FIFA World Cup Brazil (360, PS3) to sharpen game mechanics for dribbling and passing. With 203 teams, 21 stadiums (including all 12 from this year's World Cup) and a new penalty-kick interface, this is as close to real life as you can get without being in the center of a riot over a malfunctioning goal-line sensor. 🐢🐢🐢



ALBUM OF THE MONTH

EMA

By Rob Tannenbaum



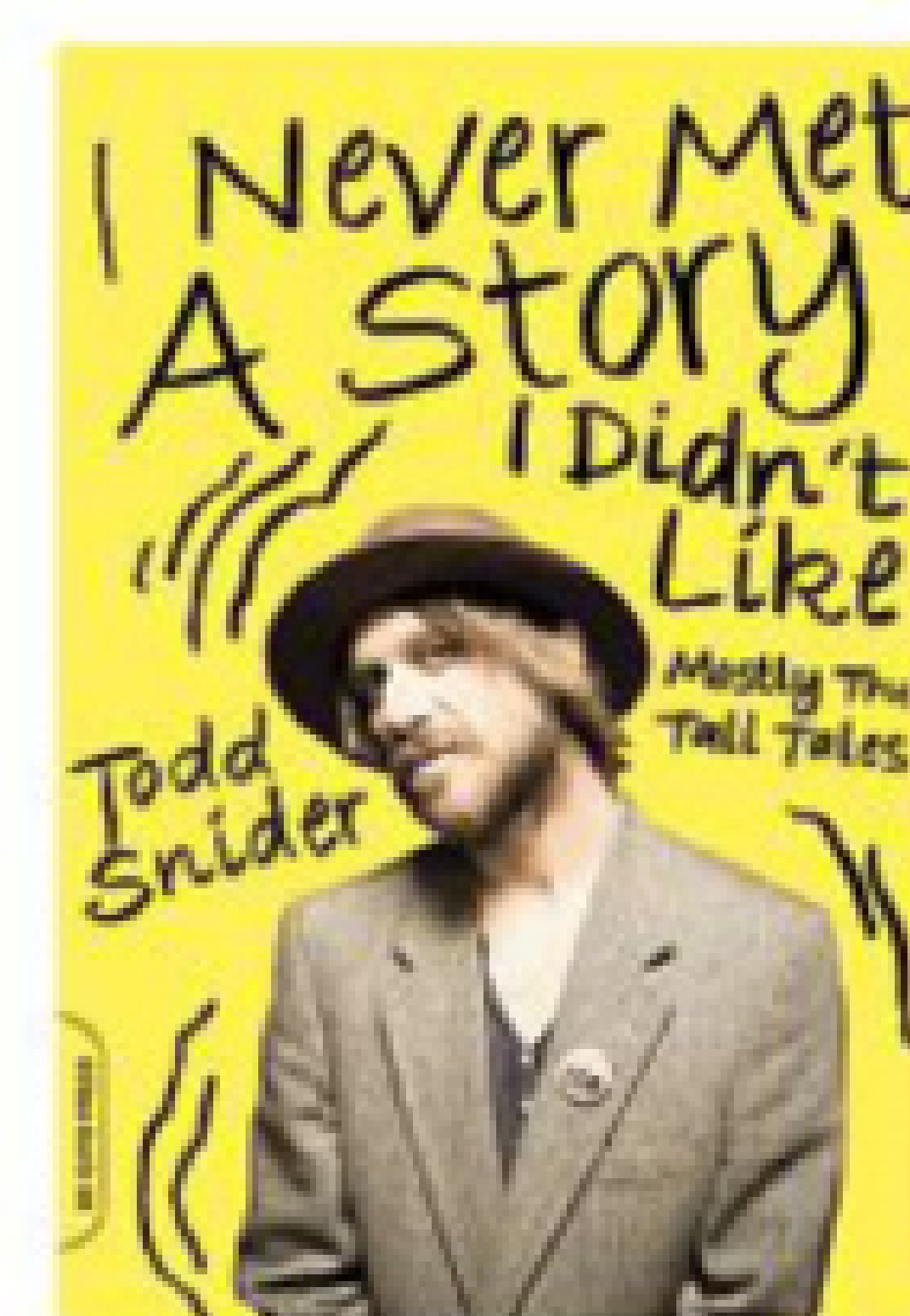
→ Erika M. Anderson hates technology and loves it too, so on *The Future's Void*, her second album as EMA, she celebrates it by telling us how much it sucks. In 11 ominous songs she coos or caterwauls about satellites, selfies and dead celebrities over an

indie-rock mix of hooks and what she calls "harsh tones." Maybe modern life is "just a big advertising campaign," as she sings, but these smart, chilly critiques couldn't exist without her mastery of synths, drum machines and other technology. 🐢🐢🐢

BOOK OF THE MONTH

I NEVER MET A STORY I DIDN'T LIKE: MOSTLY TRUE TALL TALES

→ Todd Snider calls himself a folksinger, but he's what your dad would refer to as a card. Snider, who is 47 on the outside and 12 on the inside, begins his riotous memoir, *I Never Met a Story I Didn't Like*, with a tale of being pelted with fruit by Jimmy Buffett ("and not in a playful way"), then proceeds to arrests, booze, drugs and yarns that involve people named Trog, Bonehead, Moon Bitch and Matthew McConaughey. He clearly declares his one goal: to "keep my life



as fucked up as it is." Because Snider doesn't narrate in chronological order, you'll probably lose count of how many times he's been in rehab. Basically, this undeservedly unpopular singer has led a life like Keith Richards's but without fame or money to hold him down.—R.T. 🐢🐢🐢



HEAVY WEIGHTS

- **39.8%** of male Chinese internet users and **38.7%** of females are now obese, according to the Chinese Communist mouthpiece *People's Daily*. China has put on as much weight in the past 10 years as Westerners have over the past 30.

WATCH IT

3.14 PETABYTES

The size of Netflix's master hard drives containing every film and TV series it offers

182 YEARS

Total time of HD streaming



LIKE A VIRGIN

- **1 in 200** U.S. women who took part in a study cited in the *British Medical Journal* claimed to have given birth despite never having had sex.



- Percent who signed a "chastity pledge" prior to becoming pregnant:

31%

- Percent of "virgin" mothers' parents who claimed they didn't have enough knowledge to discuss sex and contraception with their daughters:

28%

STAR POWERS

- Age at which female movie stars reach their earnings peak:

34

- Age at which male movie stars reach their earnings peak:

51

- Amount Hollywood's 10 top-earning actresses made from June 2012 to June 2013: **\$182 million**



June 2012-June 2013

- Amount their male counterparts made during the same period: **\$464 million**

DISLIKE



- Between 2011 and March 2013, the State Department spent **\$630,000** to increase its Facebook "likes" on four of its pages from **100,000** to more than **2 million**.

BOOK 'EM

- Nearly 25% of American adults did not read a book in the past year, a percentage that has tripled since 1978.

RELATED

- The average child reads 40 minutes per day—more than the average American adult.

HOUSE OF CARDS

\$44 BILLION

- Total value of unused gift cards Americans have accumulated

SINCE 2008

WALK THE WALK

- People who text while walking move more slowly, hunch their shoulders and walk erratically, according to a University of Queensland study. Researchers described those who walk and text as "elderly robots."



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THE GREAT PORN HUNT

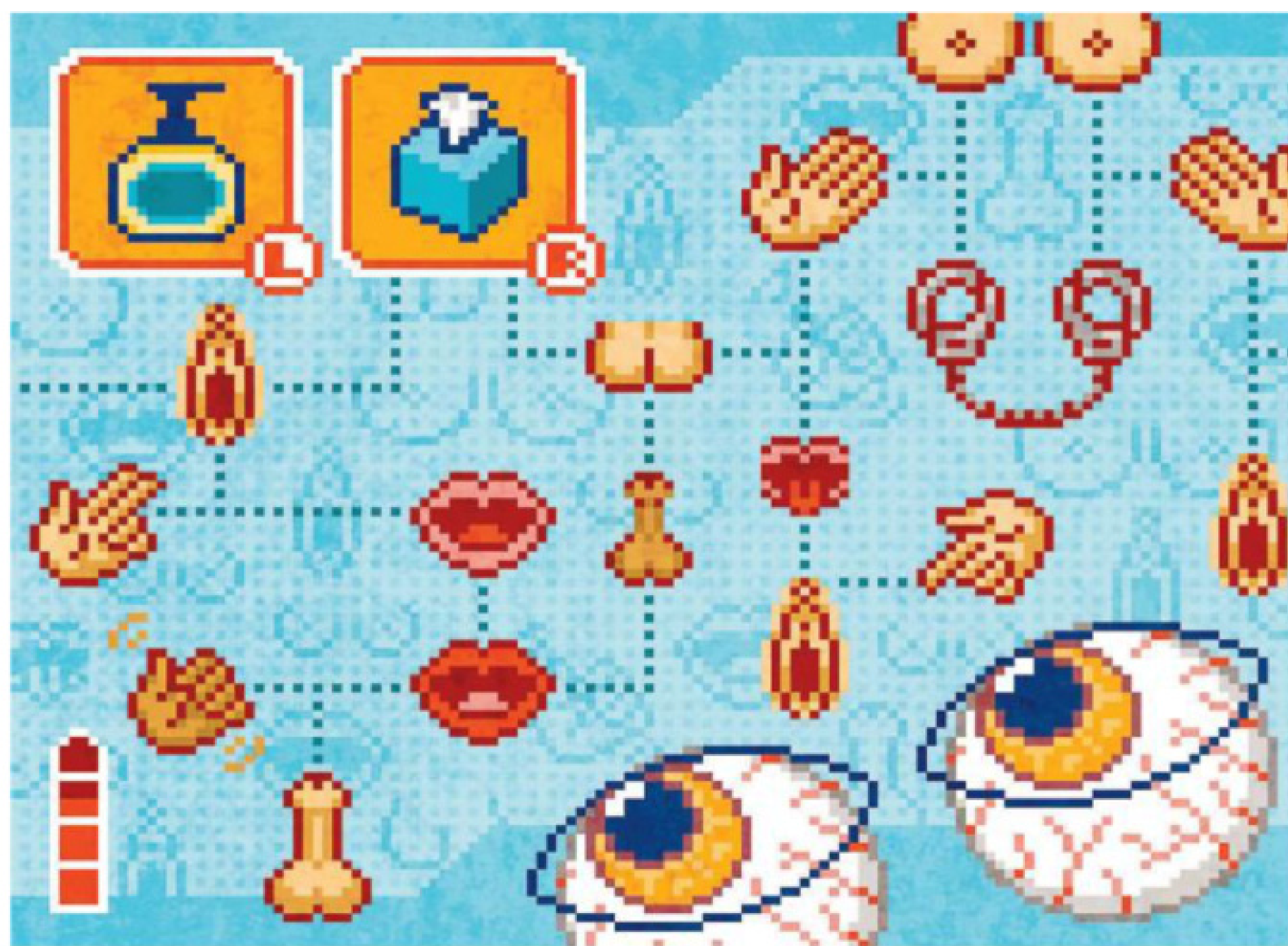
SOMETIMES THE JOURNEY IS MORE FUN THAN THE DESTINATION

Comparatively, watching porn is productive. The hours I truly regret are the many I've spent *searching* for porn and not finding what I want. I've lost evenings just scrolling through hundreds of tiny squares on porn search engines, rolling my cursor to analyze a few staccato frames, bookmarking some and clearing my browser without ever choosing one. If online porn had waiters, mine would be annoyed at having to check my table so many times. Also, he would be annoyed at not having studied harder in high school so he wouldn't wind up as an online porn waiter.

Coming up empty was not my intention when I turned on my computer. I fully intended to watch some porn. Actually, I meant to do some work, but I eventually accepted the fact that no work was going to happen and I should just let myself watch porn. But I could not even accomplish watching porn. Which is a particularly simple task, since I wasn't even trying to watch an entire porn film but just one part of one scene. That's how low I had set the bar. And yet I was distracted from my very limited goal because the porn search engine offered me a glimpse into the infinity of the universe. Or at least the infinity of really weird things naked people, semi-naked people and colorful pieces of plastic can do to one another. Which is still pretty infinite.

I become weighted with guilt not only for wasting my time but also for disrespecting how the medium was designed to be viewed. What would these porn stars think if they knew they'd endured a double-penetration pile driver so I could watch a few one-inch-by-one-inch squares at a time? It's like reading four quotes from Falstaff and deciding I've had enough of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—which, by the way, is a horrible name for a porn film.

It's not that I'm some perfectionist searching for the perfect lighting and set decoration, unable to remain turned on thanks to continuity errors. No, I know from my few camping experiences that I



can masturbate to forest shadows. I also know that, to a large extent, all porn is exactly the same: People fall deeply in love, express their love and, I assume, nine months later form a family, sometimes a very nontraditional one with one mommy and a dozen daddies.

No, I have the same problem third-world refugees who relocate to suburban America report after visiting their first supermarket. They are paralyzed by the overwhelming options, unable to choose from so many nearly identical but clearly different brands of pasta sauce.

They are stuck in a permanent, unpleasant state of browsing, fearful of making the wrong choice. Now imagine how much more difficult that decision would be if pasta sauce gave you an erection.

The human brain was designed for the task it had to do for tens of thousands of years: check out the few women in our tiny tribe we weren't related to, invent disgusting fantasies about them and replay those fantasies nightly. But between porn, amateur porn, Reddit selfies, European porn and those weird sites where girls take photos of themselves in yoga pants, our tribe has expanded to include the entire globe. Yet, in order to ensure our tribe's survival, our brains still try to collect information on all the members.

Physiologically, we're doomed. Seeking pleasure floods our brains with dopamine, whereas actually getting pleasure stimulates our opioid system. Sure, watching porn makes you feel like a heroin addict, but that's a lot more pleasant than the meth-head I become

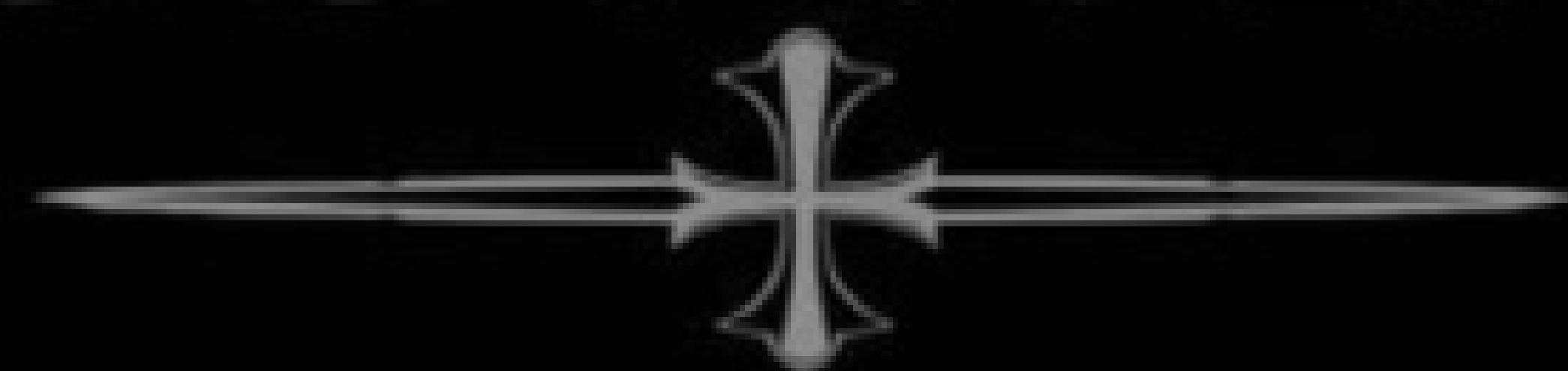
when I search for porn clips. I lose all sense of time, possibly because our sense of time might be controlled by the dopamine system, which I am throwing out of whack. Or it could be that I lose all sense of time because I'm really lazy and it's easy to look at flickering pictures of naked people. I prefer the dopamine theory.

Brian Knutson, a Stanford neuroscientist, has done MRIs on people as they played investment simulations and found we are more stimulated by the possibility of high returns than we are when we get them. The possibility of great porn is more exciting than great porn itself. It's the same impetus that keeps everyone dating online instead of getting in a relationship, or wasting a night clicking through BuzzFeed lists, or spiraling into online shopping holes, or reading tweet after tweet we can't remember 10 minutes later. The internet is a dealer of mini hits of speed that blur our eyes and eat our time. We are not surfing; we are drowning. At least, unlike BuzzFeed and Twitter addicts, I'm drowning in things that social mores prevent me from boring other people with over dinner. Though, to be honest, I would prefer those dinners.

What I need is to have my choices taken away from me. Or to stop watching porn. But it would be way easier if someone would just work up an algorithm, based on my particular perversions, that delivered only one porn clip per search, with no options. A porn *omakase* that removes the menu from my hand. If Google would just focus on doing this instead of stupid things like driverless cars, it would free up more than enough of my time to drive my own car.



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I grew up in Texas but always hated sports. When I wanted to talk to boys, they were watching sports. When I wanted to talk to my dad, he was watching sports. When my debate team needed money for a trip, the money went to sports instead. (I was a bit of a nerd, but it was still unfair!) Like most women, I've pretended to like sports for a boyfriend or 10, sat by as his team "got the job done" or not, taking solace in chips and dip. But I secretly wanted to get to a point where I could insist we watch something else or I could slip into the other room to read (still a nerd). I know men are onto this lady behavior. They know we don't want to be there. They know we live for half-time and dread overtime. They know we want to spend our time doing anything else, like going outside. You know what I'm talking about. But...what if you could change that? What if you could get your sports-loathing girl to *love* sports? Well, it's possible. It happened to me.

What changed sports for me was the story of Bill Buckner. You know the one: Buckner let Mookie Wilson's ball roll between his legs, which ultimately led to the Red Sox losing game six of the 1986 World Series and simultaneously ruined Buckner's life. It might seem crazy I made it to adulthood without hearing the story, but I did. I heard it in a documentary, *The Curse of the Bambino*, in 2003, and it changed everything. I *cared* about Bill Buckner. I *cared* that he wore his history like chains and that his family did too. I cared about the Red Sox. I wanted them to win the World Series the next year just to take the pressure off Bill Buckner. And that's when I realized I didn't care about the "sports" of sports but I did care about the players. There was a riveting human-drama-filled Life-

time movie on every major sports team. And I love me some Lifetime movies.

My anti-sports approach to sports drives guys crazy. I'll say things like "I want this guy to score because his mom just got out of the hospital." But it gets my butt in a stadium seat or on a couch, not questioning what it would be like to be at brunch. And you can get your girl to feel the same. Throw some human-interest sports stories at her. Girls *like* to feel things. Dare her not to care. And start with a gateway sport: college basketball.

There's nothing better than the NCAA tournament for attracting fresh blood. How can your girl not care about these kids? All eyes on them. Hearts on the court. Most will never play professionally and this is it. So much pressure. So much emotion. Remember the year that star from Gonzaga rolled around on the floor crying when his team lost to UCLA?

BY HILARY WINSTON

I mean, they're *kids*. They're missing shots that will haunt them for the rest of their lives (remember when Chris Webber called a time-out he didn't have?) or making shots they'll dine out on for the rest of their lives (ask Bryce Drew from Valparaiso, who made "the Shot" in 1998). And you know what they call teams that come from behind in the tournament? Cinderella stories. March Madness is the gateway for any non-sports-loving lady with a heart. Just show her a "One Shining Moment" montage. Last season one of the most talked-about stories was Kevin Ware and his grotesque broken leg that shot through his skin, too horrifying to show on TV. But the bigger story was the guy who went to his aid, Luke Hancock. While some of his teammates were throwing up, Luke comforted Kevin, even though Luke

himself needed comforting. His dad was sick. Dying. But he put his problems aside to help his teammate. Without the star Kevin Ware, Luke, a pretty uncelebrated player, went on to lead his team to the championship title. He was named the tournament's most outstanding player. And his dad was watching. It's a sad but beautiful story. What a moment. What a guy. That's a jersey I can get behind.

Sports are metaphors for life. Triumph and tragedy. There's always a winner (Yankees often) and always a loser (Mets often). Heroes and villains. Fathers and sons (the Mannings). Brothers (also the Mannings). Legacies and underdogs. (I still get choked up when I talk about my hometown team, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, making it to the tournament for the first time.) It showcases man's greatest moments (Olympic "miracle" hockey team) and his worst (Black Sox). Superstars and utility players alike go out there and show you not just what they are but *who* they are. It's not a coincidence the New Orleans Saints won the Super Bowl after Katrina. It's just throwing and tackling, but it really meant something that Sunday. Guys were staring at their feet in living rooms all across America. Just like when the Boston Red Sox won the World Series after the bombing. That story alone can get a girl who hates sports to make you a buffalo-wing cake with BOSTON STRONG written in blue cheese dressing. So that's your angle: the soft underbelly of sports. People may say I'm watching for the wrong reasons, but I'm watching. And next year, while you and your newly sports-loving girl are deep into your brackets (you're welcome), I'll be at the Final Four (my guy can thank me for the tickets). I don't know which teams will be playing, but it doesn't matter, because any team will have a story worth rooting for.

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How close are scientists to creating a real sexbot?—R.S., Toms River, New Jersey

If you mean a walking, talking, sex-obsessed fembot à la Austin Powers, not close at all. The sex robot is one of those futurist fantasies that, like the flying car, have captured the imagination but have so far failed to materialize. In the next few decades we could see the convergence of, say, a sexy Siri and an extremely dexterous, ambulatory android, but today's offerings are a far cry from that reality. True Companion makes a \$6,995 silicone-covered product that responds to touch, has motorized private parts and is capable of rudimentary conversation. But if you're dead set on experiencing sex with minimal emotional attachment, a better use of your \$6,995 would be to avail yourself of an elite member of the world's oldest profession. Better yet, you could spend it on psychotherapy and figure out how to overcome your fear of intimacy.

I've long been fascinated with time capsules and have finally decided to make one. Among the objects I'd like to include in my capsule is a bottle of some sort of alcohol. It will be buried in a remote location in the Texas Panhandle and so will be there a long time, possibly 100 years or more, until someone has the opportunity to discover and open it. What would be the best kind of alcohol to bury? I'm thinking some brand of whiskey or a bottle of a good red wine.—H.G., Canyon, Texas

With the exception of the best sweet wines, such as French Sauternes, very few wines will be drinkable after 100 years, even when stored in a climate-controlled wine cellar. Given the extreme temperature fluctuations in the Texas Panhandle, we recommend going with an 80-proof spirit. It will never freeze (unless the temperature drops to minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit). Whiskey is a great idea—particularly high-end Kentucky bourbons, which are currently in short supply (collectors are buying and hoarding them at unprecedented rates). Plus, should you find yourself in a tight spot financially, you'll be able to break open your time capsule and cash out your liquid assets.

What color deck shoes would you recommend to wear with black pants? Can you suggest a particular style?—T.H., Cambridge, Massachusetts

When pairing pants with shoes of any style you generally want some contrast in shade. Pale tan or camel looks nice against black, whereas a dark brown would look too similar in tone and thus seem a bit like an accidental mismatch.

PLAYBOY ADVISOR



What is the etiquette for asking a waitress or bartender out when she's working? Some of the places I frequent have very attractive servers, but I don't want to be distasteful and put them on the spot.—J.L., Scottsdale, Arizona

The etiquette is you don't. Of course there's the occasional exception to that rule (a friend of ours once closed a bar with a hot bartender and took her home, but he looks like a young Tom Cruise and is guilelessly charming and a gentleman of the highest order). But we've heard many more stories from waitresses complaining about douchey male patrons hitting on them. Many a good dinner has been ruined by the ice-cold dessert of rejection. Of course those attractive servers are dating—and they're often dating other servers, bartenders and chefs. If you're determined to date someone in the food and beverage industry, you might consider changing careers.

With a casual look you can play more with the contrast. Top-Siders, the Sperry-branded version of the classic boat shoe, come in dozens of styles and colors. If your personal style is more flamboyant, push the contrast to the maximum with red or white shoes. Or revert to the "like with like" (i.e., monochromatic) rule of fashion and wear black Top-Siders. Get a pair with white soles so the bottom half of your body doesn't completely disappear.

Every time I go to bed my wife of eight years checks my computer and

cell phone. She sits there for hours looking through every single action I've taken. I've tried password protection, but that caused a problem. I'm not doing anything wrong, but I feel like a prisoner in my own home. When I confront her about this, we always start to argue and she wants to know what I'm hiding that she can't see. What's going on here?—T.C., Birmingham, Alabama

The fact that you describe your attempts to discuss your wife's monitoring of your activities as "confronting her" leads us to believe you're behaving defensively, as does the fact that you tried to lock her out. Soften your approach and open up more. If you truly have nothing to hide, then ask her to tell you specifically what she's worried about: What are her concrete fears? Was there a past breach of trust, whether actual or perceived? Sometimes a small suspicion or insecurity can grow into something bigger than is warranted. If it's all in her head, then you should take the focus off you and empathize with her; whatever is in her mind is obviously causing her at least as much mental anguish as it is you. Let your digital life be an open book to her and take steps to figure out what is causing her anxiety. If letting her open up while remaining open to hearing her fears doesn't help, couples therapy would be a safe place to explore this together.

My friends say I pay too much for my glasses—\$600 a pair versus two pairs for \$120. I'm convinced my eye doctor uses a better lens material than the discount places. Is there a difference? Also, what is the make and model of the sunglasses John Elway wore at the Super Bowl?—L.K., Salem, Ohio

The biggest difference is the business model: Discount eyeglass stores are built on value, volume and vanity. As much as stylish glasses can improve your look, that's not as important as how they improve your looking. In a 2011 study, researchers ordered a total of 200 pairs of glasses from the top 10 online discount-eyeglass companies and discovered that in some cases prescriptions were incorrect, special coatings weren't applied and, most alarming, nearly 25 percent of the glasses included lenses that failed impact testing. Glasses are much more than a functional fashion statement; they're medical devices, and an optometrist puts that as the priority. As cool as it is to virtually "try on" glasses on a fancy website to see how the frames fit your face, an optometrist is trained to make sure the frames are positioned to best

improve your vision. This can be done only in person. As for John Elway's glasses, if you're talking about the wraparound shades with the gold trim, our best guess is they're a slightly older style of Prada shield glasses.

My wife and I have been together for more than 15 years. She has no interest in having sex with me anymore. In the past the sex has been good and we enjoyed playing with various toys and vibrators, but I recently discovered she has been using our favorite vibrator alone. She got really angry when I discovered this and she refused to discuss it. The next day she packed up the vibrator in question and put it away as if it were evil. Why does being discovered upset her? And why is she going it alone? I didn't disapprove of what she was doing other than the fact that I felt left out. In fact I'm pleased that she wanted any sex at all, even if it was by herself. She gets upset if I ever "go solo," so I stopped for years. But out of sheer frustration I have started again, this time in secret, which I'm uncomfortable with. What do you say?—N.M., London, Ohio

We suggest telling her everything you just told us. But before you do, ask yourself what the issue is with going at it alone, which is by no means abnormal, particularly in a relationship as long as yours. You sound a lot like the couple in "The Piña Colada Song" (anyone younger than 40 should google the lyrics), who over the years have grown out of touch with each other's dreams and needs. It sounds as though you and your wife are both adept at self-love. Admit why you've drifted apart, commit to remedying the situation and then work on rekindling your desire to be intimate together. Maybe the first step is to join self-loving forces and compare notes.

Now that pot is legal in Washington state, I'm considering using it for medicinal and possibly recreational purposes. I have trouble with insomnia, and I can no longer take sleeping pills because of the adverse effect they have on me. Marijuana is said to help with sleeplessness, so I'm going to give it a shot. Here is the problem: I have two kids, and my wife hates smoking of any kind. I've started to look into vaporizers, but I'm kind of lost when it comes to deciding which to go with. Can you give me any advice on tackling this? The smaller the device the better—I don't want to have to explain a new appliance to my kids.—H.R., Seattle, Washington

While marijuana can certainly be used to treat insomnia, for some people it can have negative effects. Some respond to it as they would a stimulant. Others find it increases their anxiety. Others don't like the mental fog the next day. Before you invest in a pricey vaporizer, talk to a reputable doctor about dosages and strains. (It sounds as though you've tried marijuana before, but be warned: Weed is more powerful than ever these days.) You'll know soon enough if it's right for you. If it turns out it is, buying your own weed and

grinding it for vaping allows you more freedom with choosing strains. Since you have kids, don't let anyone talk you into buying edible marijuana candies, cookies or other sweets. That's an accident waiting to happen. The Pax model from Ploom is a quality vaporizer that's only about four inches long, has a sleek, low-key design and is rechargeable.

Several porn videos I've seen show couples having anal sex and then switching to vaginal sex. Do they stop filming and clean up to make the switch, or are they taking a risk here? Isn't it unwise to go from anal to vaginal? Also, in some other videos a man may lick a woman's anus—without using any protection—and then lick her vagina. I'm surprised they wouldn't take some sort of precaution. Isn't this risky behavior as well?—S.S., Englewood, Colorado

Porn videos are shot over hours, with multiple takes and much resting and washing and lunch breaks and hair and makeup adjustments and water breaks and fluffing and a lot of other boring stuff that civilians don't have to bother with while having sex. But practicing sexual hygiene is one way the porn industry stays in business, and it's the one thing you should emulate, even though you don't have the benefit of editing your sex-position changes into one seamless narrative. Yes, it is absolutely risky to go straight from anal to vaginal or oral sex without either washing your penis thoroughly with soap and hot water or changing condoms.

For the past few months I've noticed my typical morning wood has turned into a raging, all-night-long hard-on. It actually wakes me up in the middle of the night. That may not sound like much of a problem, but it seems to be the only time I get hard. Strip joints, online porn and even regular sex with my wife don't seem to do much. Is this a physical or a mental problem?—M.P., Chicago, Illinois

The medical term for what you describe is "nocturnal penile tumescence." It's used by sex therapists as the primary test to determine whether the reasons for erectile dysfunction are psychological or physical. Clearly your hardware is up to snuff. Tackle this problem by seeing a sex therapist who can help you get your two heads in sync again.

How long is it okay to keep a cigar outside of a humidor before lighting it up? Is there a better way to preserve it than a ziplock bag?—M.C., Wichita, Kansas

Ideally less than an hour, as a cigar instantly begins to lose moisture in a dry climate. Immediately transferring a cigar to a metal tube can buy you a day of freshness. You can also buy cigars from a smoke shop in factory-sealed glass tubes. All of these are elegant and effective alternatives to the plastic sandwich bag. If you're going on a trip, you can get a decent dopp-kit-size travel humidor for around 30 bucks.

First of all, I'm not the guy who wrote in about a threesome in the Decem-

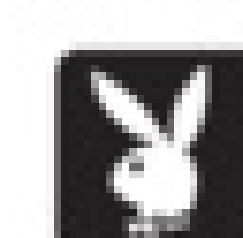
ber issue. However, I have had several threesomes and I'm an average guy. The first was 15 years ago when I was a freshman in college. The last was with the love of my life, my wife of 10 years, and a lady we met at a bar while on vacation. All I can say is, almost everyone is curious and nobody wants it to be weird. Take a deep breath, enjoy all the bits and pieces and never bring it up after the fact. After our threesome, my wife and I actually began to feel like some modern-day Bonnie and Clyde.—T.M., Montauk, New York

Unlike Bonnie and Clyde's, may your luck never run out. Thanks for the report from the front lines.

My husband and I were high school sweethearts and have been together now for more than a decade. We have always had (and still have) a healthy and satisfying sex life and are both comfortable expressing our fantasies. Although he is the only sexual partner I've ever had, he was pretty experienced when we met. Until recently I'd never met anyone else for whom I felt the same sexual attraction I do for my husband. However, a few months ago I started having intense fantasies about one of my husband's friends. I'm mortified. I can't bear to say anything to my husband. I love him so much and he never disappoints me sexually, but I just can't stop thinking about his friend. Is there something wrong with me? How can I get these fantasies to stop? We see this friend often and I'm wondering if I should be avoiding him.—M.M., Muncie, Indiana

There is nothing wrong with you at all. Studies show that anywhere between 60 and 80 percent of women fantasize about men who aren't their partners. So don't beat yourself up. However, obsessive fantasies often provide a handy escape from real-life challenges. Do an honest inventory of your feelings: Are your career, family life and social life as satisfying as your sex life with your husband? Is the rest of your marriage what you want it to be? If all that's in order, we suggest channeling the bonus arousal into your sex life with your husband. The fantasies will most likely diminish with time. You haven't told us anything about how your husband's friend is behaving. If he's flirting with you or has any part in encouraging your attraction, we'd suggest keeping some distance until either he gets the message or your fantasies subside. The last thing you want to do is jeopardize the great thing you and your husband have built.

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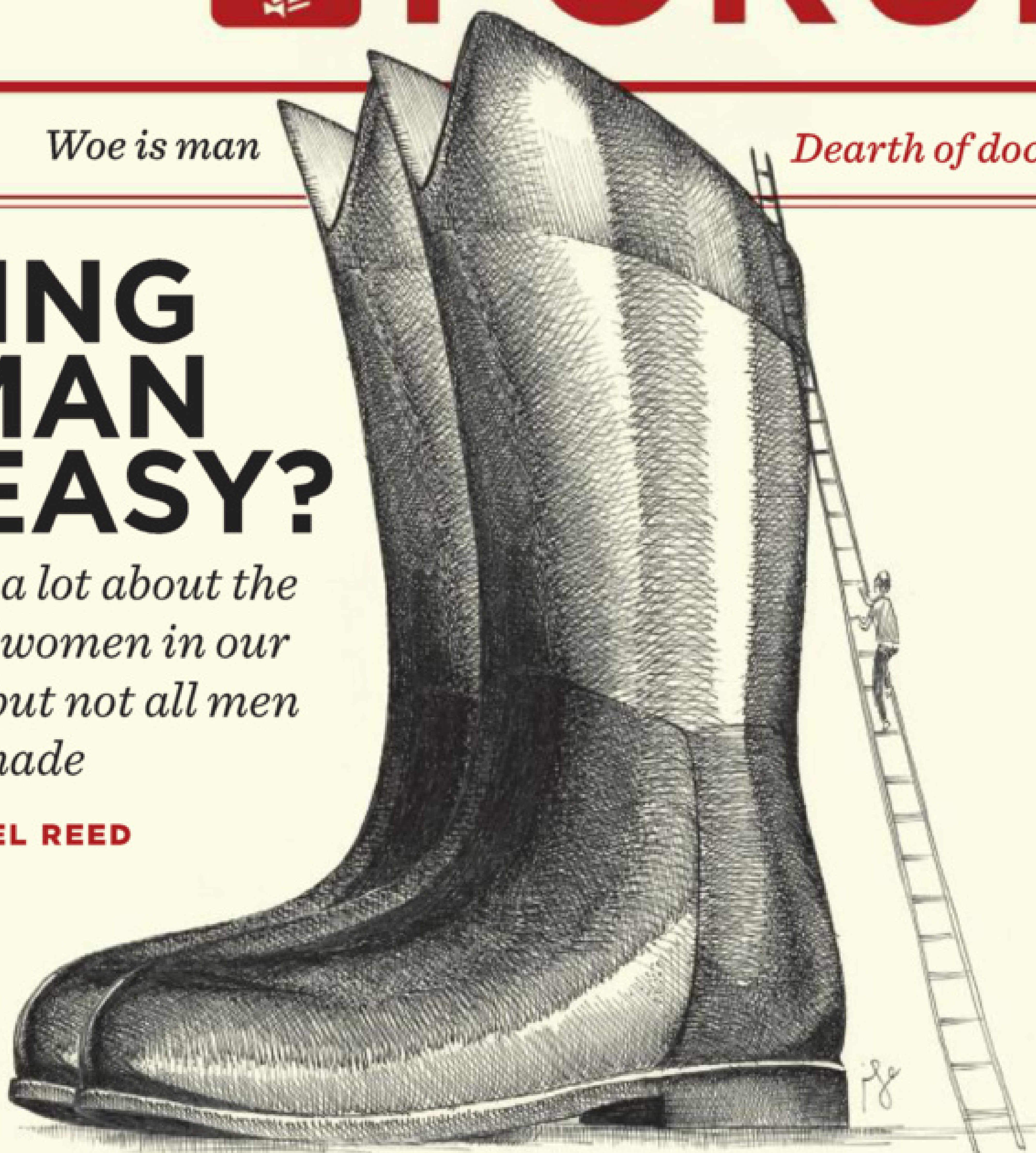
Woe is man

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BEING A MAN IS EASY?

We hear a lot about the plight of women in our society, but not all men have it made

BY ISHMAEL REED



Writing on the Tikkun Daily blog, Harriet Fraad notes that the feminist movement began as an integrated working-class movement only to be coopted by “privileged, educated” women. The producers of some network programs today are women who appear unaware of this hierarchy among women, whom they lump together. So, on a number of shows, these privileged and educated women, successful academics and professionals, complain about the war against them. Even Abby Huntsman, a billionaire’s granddaughter, says the war against women is a war against her. Comedian Nancy Giles appeared earlier this year on Melissa Harris-Perry’s MSNBC show. On Harris-Perry’s program men get shamed every week. Some men even appear on camera to confess their crimes against women or to exhibit their uncritical support for the bourgeois version of sisterhood. But Giles appeared on air and said, “It’s hard to be a woman.” Does this mean being a man is easy? Statistics tend to refute that.

Many years ago, I referred in a magazine article to the rising suicide rate among white men and blamed it on popu-

lar media’s image of white men as people with closets filled with superhero capes. Just take a look at the ads for movies and television shows. The white men are at the macho kick-ass center, with women clinging behind them. Their black, Asian or Hispanic sidekicks are shown with less prominence. They’re sidekicks, after all. Even though Jamie Foxx was the star of *Django Unchained*, when the movie’s producers went after some serious money, the ads featured Leonardo DiCaprio.

The same thing happened with *12 Years a Slave* when the Italian distributor made (and later apologized for) posters for the movie that featured enlarged images of white actors alongside a small image of the film’s black star.

Since I wrote that article, the suicide rate among white men has worsened. While in 2010 the suicide rate among black males was 8.7 per 100,000, the statistics for white men were 22.6 per 100,000. White men are also more likely to suffer from depression than black men, and the health statistics for black men stink. Life expectancy for black males was 4.7 years less than for white males in 2010. This difference is due to higher death rates for black men from heart disease, homicide, cancer,

On her program men get shamed every week.

READER RESPONSE

HOW ABOUT SOME PRIVACY?

I was glad to see Heidi Boghosian’s article on private corporations and government spying (“The Surveillance Industry,” October 2013). Boghosian emphasizes the looming danger that comes from lack of true oversight and transparency in the surveillance-industrial complex—something we’ve seen time and again in American history. For example, Martin Luther King Jr. and other major figures in the civil rights movement were under FBI surveillance. A congressional committee later reported that agents harassed the domestic activists, actively trying to



undermine their cause. But out of this dark time came important legal changes: Congress passed a surveillance-reform law. The Supreme Court recognized that members of groups such as the NAACP have a right to privacy even though they publicly advocate for controversial causes.

As Boghosian describes, the government now practices a more technologically sophisticated form of domestic spying that affects all of us. As a means of fighting terrorism, it collects nearly every American’s phone records and



READER RESPONSE

compiles databases that can reveal our associations—political, social, intimate and otherwise. The government claims this is harmless because, unlike FBI activities in the 1950s and 1960s, it does not target political groups.

History shows that's wrong. Widespread collection of information about individuals' associations is dangerous to democracy. The Electronic Frontier Foundation, where I work as a legal fellow, is suing the National Security Agency on behalf of 24 politically diverse advocacy groups to stop this surveillance and preserve the political freedoms so hard-won by civil rights activists. It's time to take another lesson from history and update our surveillance laws to offer true privacy in this digital age.

Andrew Crocker
San Francisco, California

PERCHANCE TO DREAM...

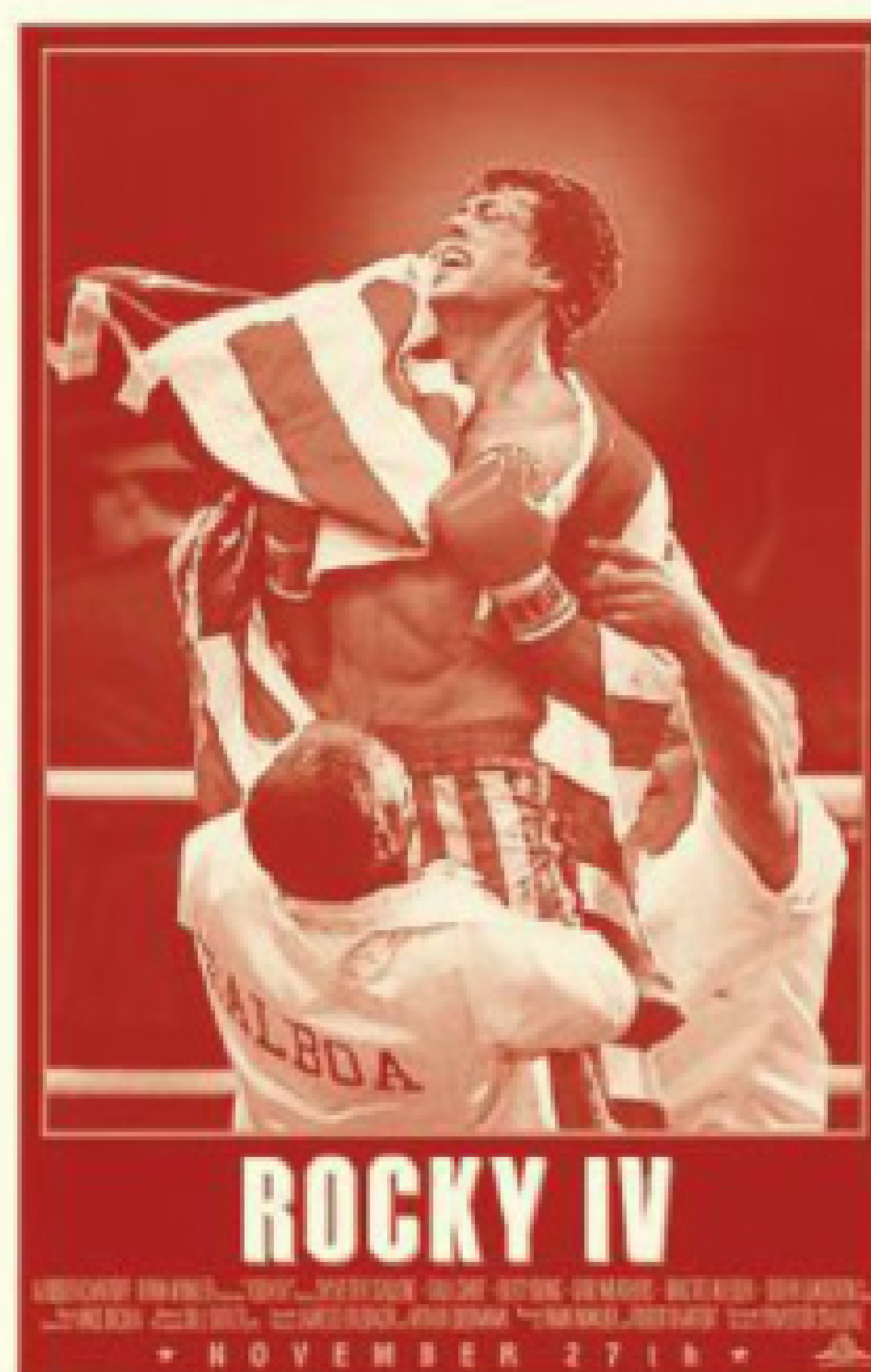
Sleep must be for losers, because I've been up all night ("Sleepers Awake," March). Jonathan Crary worries that time spent asleep is undercapitalized, but I have a proposal for him. Put his book on tape



so I can listen to it when I can't sleep. That would put me to sleep for sure—and then Playmates can keep me company in my dreams.

Greg Scott
Portland, Oregon

A sleepless society is surely not a desirable one, considering the implications of how cranky people are even after a good eight hours.



DOES THE PORTRAYAL OF WHITE MEN AS HEROES DISTRACT US FROM WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING?

strokes and other conditions. While acknowledging there are racial disparities in the health industry that are exacerbated by the refusal of some state governments to extend Medicaid to segments of the population, Dr. Michael LeNoir, president of the National Medical Association, says some of the disparity is self-inflicted. "Black men have worse health because they often don't take care of themselves," says LeNoir. "They often won't go to the doctor for regular checkups or until the

problems are far advanced. You can't put it all on low socioeconomic status, because black men die more often and are sicker across all socioeconomic groups." Involuntary medical experiments on blacks since slavery, which continue to this day, have caused some black men and women to be suspicious of the medical community.

MSNBC has a number of pundits who tackle issues affecting women but no shows addressing issues of men. It may be hard to be a woman, as Giles exclaimed, but statistics show that being a man ain't no walk in the park either.

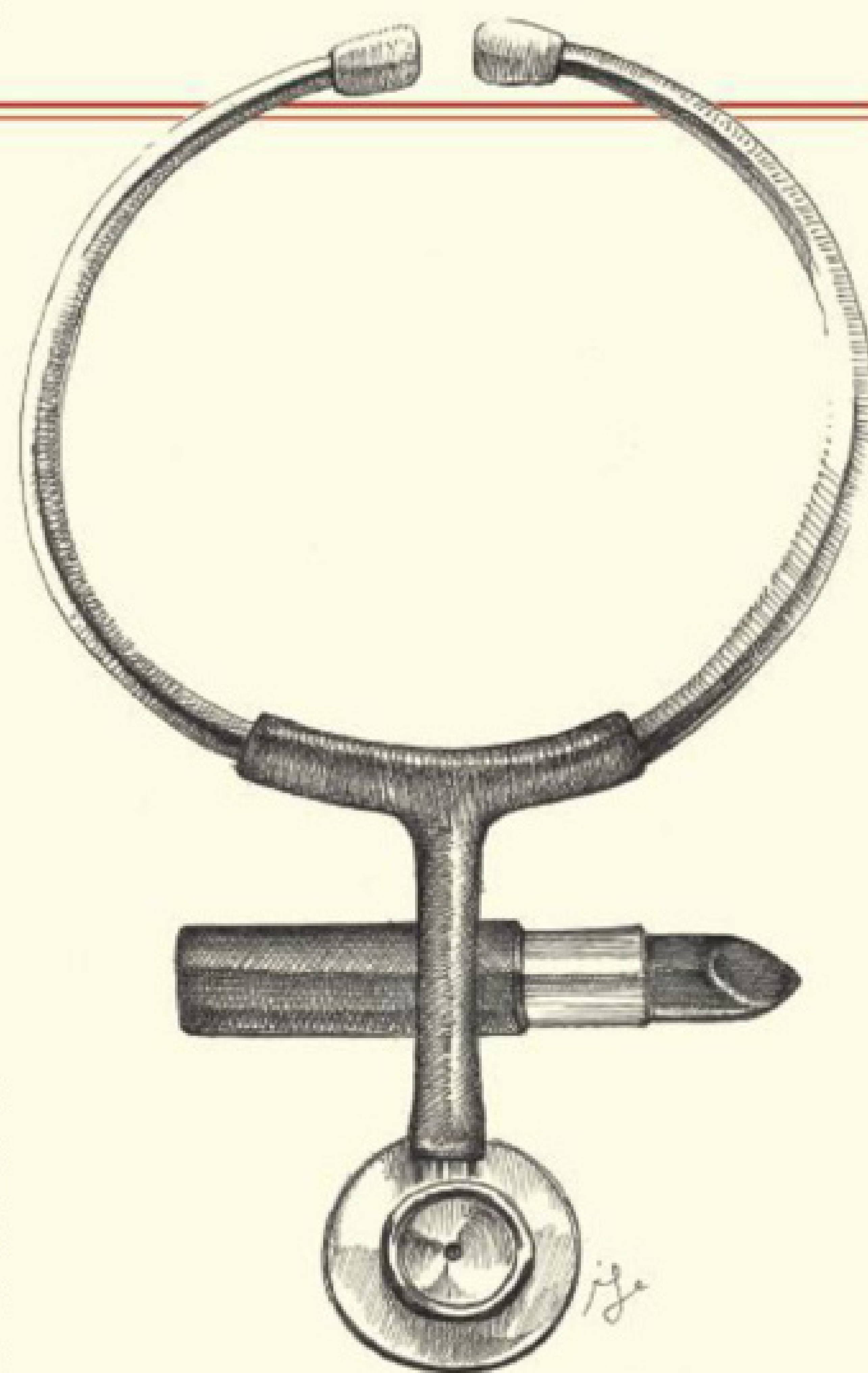
THE DOCTOR IS OUT

Why is there a shortage of doctors in the U.S.? Maybe because we have too many women physicians

BY MELBA NEWSOME

When Erika Gantt graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1997, hers was the first class in which the number of women outnumbered men. This was touted as proof that women had made significant progress in cracking one of the hardest glass ceilings. It proved that women had finally achieved parity with men in a competitive field at the nation's premier university. More than 15 years later, the influx of women into medicine is being blamed for exacerbating one of the country's largest health care problems: the growing doctor shortage.

A study from the Association of American Medical Colleges' Center for Work-



force Studies estimates that by 2020 the U.S. will experience a shortage of more than 90,000 physicians, and 130,000 by 2025. This accelerated shortage in doctors is due in large measure to the millions of aging baby boomers who will need more medical care. There's also no denying that we aren't turning out enough doctors to keep pace with population growth. The U.S. population has increased by more than 35 million since 2000, while

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the number of available residency slots to train new doctors has barely increased.

Although the enrollment rate at medical schools has remained steady, the number of female medical students has increased every year since 1969, when they accounted for just nine percent of all medical students. That number peaked in 2003, at 49.6. In 2012, 47 percent of medical school students and 30 percent of physicians in the workforce were women. The latter is expected to grow significantly as more physicians retire. Here's a stark reality: Women doctors, on the aggregate, have shorter careers, take more time off and work fewer hours than male doctors. The primary care field is increasingly popular with women, perhaps because residencies are shorter and there are more opportunities for job sharing. Primary care is also the area with the greatest shortage.

Adding to the problem is the number of cumulative hours doctors work. Since 2005 the part-time physician workforce has expanded by 62 percent. According to 2010 survey data from the American Medical Group Association, nearly four in 10 female doctors between the ages of 35 and 44 work part-time. Another study found that female physicians also tend to work an average of 4.5 fewer hours than their male colleagues. It may be unfair, but this explains why women are blamed for the looming shortage of doctors.

Should medical school admission continue to be gender blind? What happens when these women leave the profession to become stay-at-home moms or decide to work part-time? "We don't have enough doctors, even today," said Los Angeles anesthesiologist Karen Sibert in an interview on NPR. "And now the estimates are that for every doctor in their 60s who retires, it's going to take between one and a half and two doctors to replace him or her because of the expectation that people just don't have to work as hard."

Gantt, an orthopedic surgeon, believes attempts to blame women for the shortage are wrongheaded and signal a double standard that ignores her male colleagues who choose not to practice. "Becoming a doctor takes so long, I don't know many women who give it up completely. But many male doctors in my class also leave medicine to go into business and industry such as biotech."

Gantt's specialty continues to be dominated by men. Of the 100 partners in her practice, only four are women, a statistic she attributes, in part, to societal attitudes. Even in this highly skilled profession, women are expected to take on a larger share of family responsibilities than

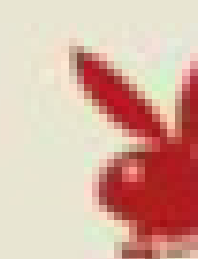
their male counterparts. And unlike their male counterparts, many don't have stay-at-home spouses.

It seems a simple fix would be to just train more doctors, but that's easier said than done. Medicine differs from other professions because education and training are heavily subsidized by the government and there are only so many slots available. In 1997 Congress imposed a cap on the number of subsidized residencies, the final hurdle to obtaining a medical license. About 34,000 U.S. and international medical school graduates competed for roughly 29,000 available slots last year. Although bills have been introduced to increase that number, those efforts have gone nowhere because the cost is considered prohibitive. Should the country continue to spend its limited resources subsidizing medical training for those who are not in it for the long haul full-time?

Sibert and others say too often doctors make personal decisions that have a negative impact on patients and society. Does a student who obtains one of these coveted spots have a responsibility to make the most of it? "If doctors aren't making full use of their training, taxpayers are losing their investment," wrote Sibert in a *New York Times* op-ed. "With a growing shortage of doctors in America, we can no longer afford to continue training doctors who don't spend their careers in the full-time practice of medicine."

Gantt is not convinced doctors owe a career-long debt to the taxpayer. She believes the grueling nature of the residency alone is more than enough payback. "During residency we did our part by providing medical help at a greatly reduced cost," she says. "We were working 80 to 100 hours a week, making \$50,000 a year alongside physician extenders—nurse practitioners and physician assistants—who make double that. All the while your student loan debt continues to accrue. I'd feel more grateful if I hadn't paid so much for my education. We leave school with enormous debt."

The cause of the shortage is twofold: There aren't enough doctors and the doctors we have don't work enough hours. The latter is largely a generational issue. Regardless of gender, more physicians are concerned with "work-life balance," a term that didn't exist in the profession years ago. There is no denying that, compared with men, more women leave the profession and work less while practicing. But until society modifies its expectations of the role of women as primary caregivers, don't expect that to change. You can expect your wait time to see a doctor to change, however. It will get longer. ■



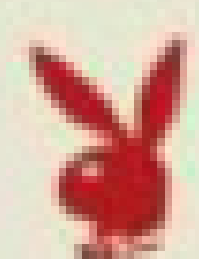
READER RESPONSE

On the other hand, the idea that we need eight hours of sleep each night is ridiculous. With an impeccable diet, you can thrive on only five hours of sleep if need be, and you can work phenomenally after six hours, though that is a whole different topic.

I believe sleep is a bother. As a writer, I hate when the feeling of exhaustion comes over me and the only thought that rules my



mind is the fantasy that I might hit the bed and not wake until next spring. I often dream about what it would be like to live a life without sleep—how much I could get done, what I could read and so on. I've learned to make use of my hours of rest by indulging the most entertaining show ever: my dreams. Everyone has wacky dreams, and I'm no exception. Then again, I practice the art of lucid dreaming, which is being conscious of when you're dreaming and thus controlling your thoughts and actions in a dream. This makes simple dreams as memorable as real-life occurrences. Last week I lay down for a nap around 3:30 P.M. and, after falling asleep, "awoke" in a dream. I looked at my hand and saw seven fingers, as well as a stubby one, and realized I was dreaming. I was ecstatic, seeing how you can do anything in that state. At one point I was riding Pegasus. After I woke up it felt as if I'd spent a day wandering in my head. When I checked my phone it was only 4:30 P.M.! It was one of the rare occurrences



READER RESPONSE

when I felt my time sleeping was spent productively.

Josh Fredette
Palmdale, California

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adults get seven to nine hours of sleep—more time for frolicking with Pegasus and Playmates.

IT'S A GAMBLE

Human greed may in part have led to global warming, but perhaps by exploiting mankind's infinite greed we can fix the problem (*Reader Response*, March). If we installed vast arrays of windmill farms, devices to harness power from waves and ocean currents, and solar-cell panels all over the world, the "free" clean electricity generated by these systems that derive juice from wind, sea and sun would enable us to greatly minimize our dependence on coal-burning power

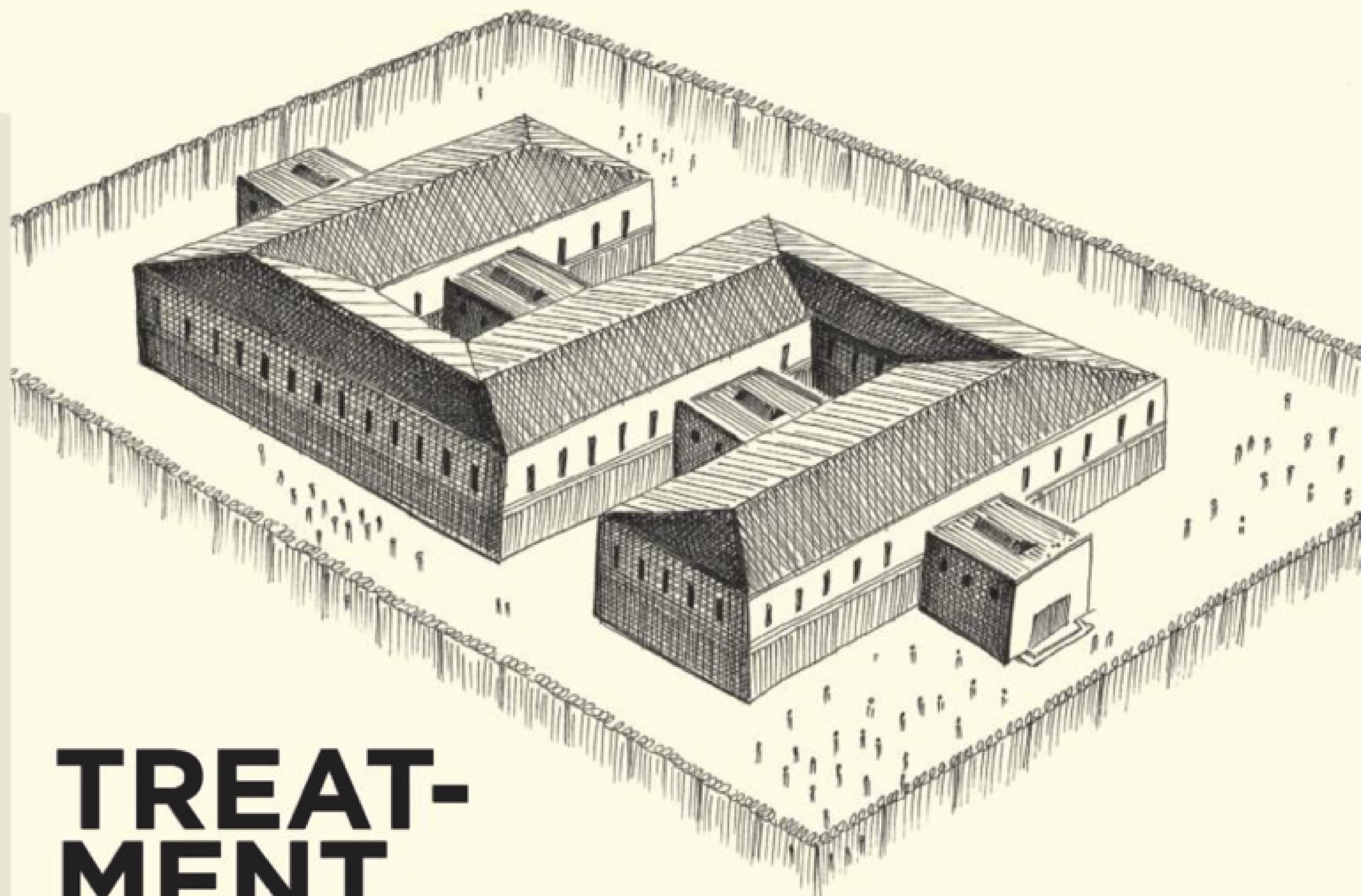
plants that emit carbon dioxide and related greenhouse gases into the earth's atmosphere. We would need a way to pay for these expensive devices. This is where a global lottery with a global-warming tax comes in: The U.S. and the United Nations should create a

"global 50-50 lottery," the world's first truly international lottery, to fund the fight against global warming. This idea has a few logistical problems but nothing we couldn't remedy if we tried.

Robert G. Schreib Jr.
Toms River, New Jersey

WORTH FIGHTING FOR

It is easy to look at TransCanada's Keystone export pipeline and think, What's the big deal? It's a line on a map, and we have lots of pipelines already. But it is more than that, and the people it would affect are many. We are small-business owners who rely on clean water for good beer. We are farmers and ranchers growing food that



TREATMENT COMPLEX

Can effective mental health treatment exist in a criminal justice system driven by profit?

**BY GALEN BAUGHMAN
AND ANDREW EXTEIN**

Josh Gravens, now 27, was sentenced to the Bill Clayton Detention Center in Littlefield, Texas when he was 13. He was told to expect a jail stay of nine months, but he spent 42 months under the supervision of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. He was not fully released until he was 21, having been detained for years without cause, he says. "I never even had a write-up," he says. "Behavior was never the issue. Grades were never an issue. We engaged willingly and aggressively."

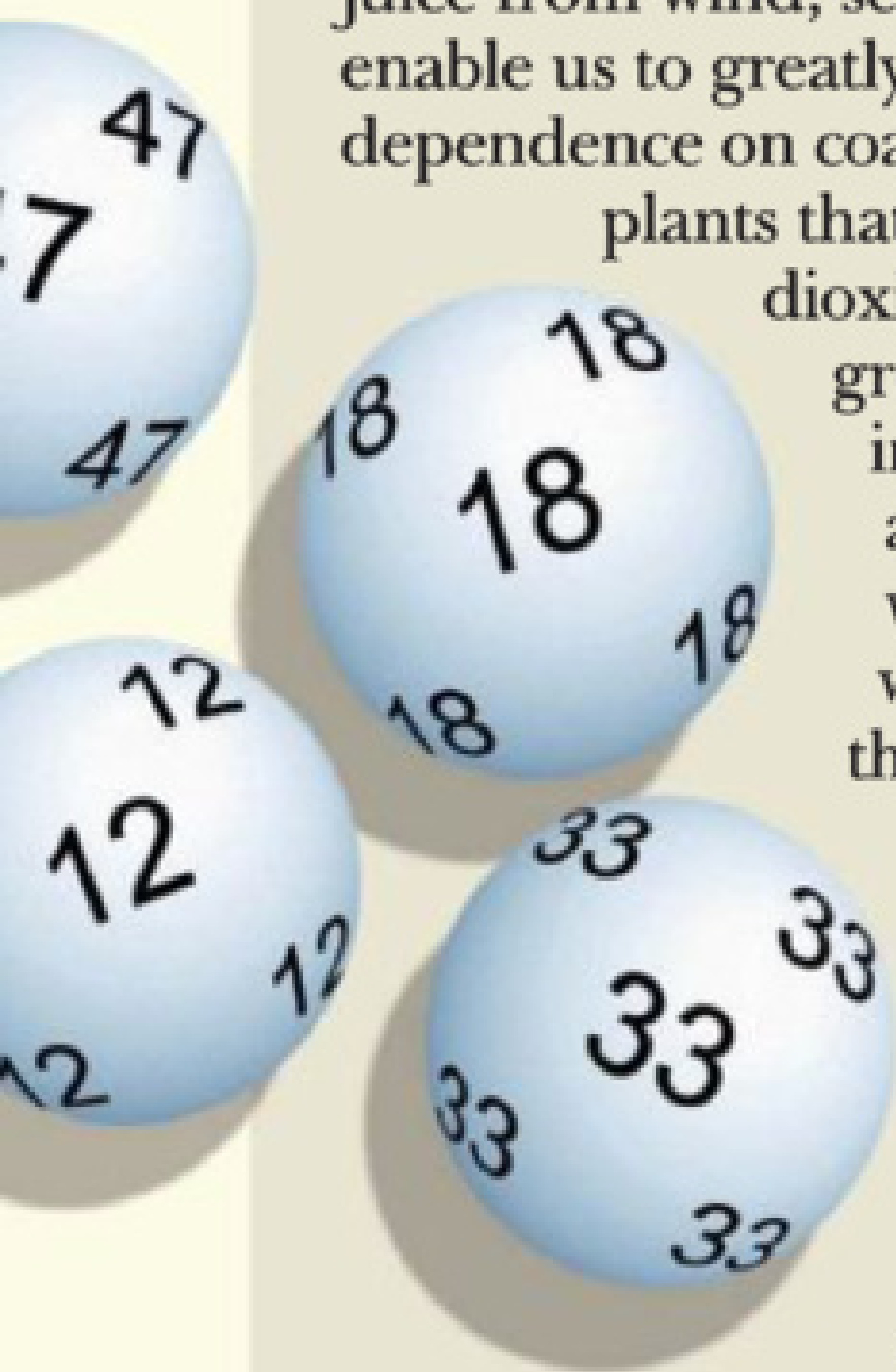
In Texas, the state contracts corporate prisons to jail juvenile offenders. Compensation per prisoner escalates by level of care. However, these facilities aren't guaranteed children at specific compensation levels, so it's often in a corporation's best interest to keep profitable offenders for as long as possible. This isn't what correctional supervision is supposed to accomplish, and it seems to be enabled by psychologists who falsify treatment records to extend incarceration times. Texas's juvenile sentencing system works by assigning indeterminate terms to offenders, with release possible only after a vague set of treatment programs has been fulfilled.

Melvin Tomison, a case manager at Clayton during the time of Gravens's

sentence, spent two hours a day discussing personal problems with the children while providing life-skills instruction. He says 10 case managers had come and gone in the 11 months prior to his arrival. "There were no problems with my reports on these kids for the first five or six months," he says. "But when a new supervisor came along, every report I filed was wrong. He would edit them to change the meaning of my observations." In one instance, a 10-year-old's report of abuse at the hands of his stepbrother was deleted from his file. "That was something that would have made a profound difference in how anyone would view his behavior and psychological state," Tomison says. "My supervisor wanted to get rid of me," he concludes, "because I was the only one getting kids out."

The legal precedent that allows psychologists to testify about the presence of mental disorders is found in the 1962 U.S. Court of Appeals decision *Jenkins v. U.S.* Use of psychologists as expert witnesses has increased since, but recent investigations have revealed that their testimony is often little more than propaganda. A 2011 study in Virginia found that the state attorney general's office relies on a small stable of experts in court arguments. These experts side in favor of prosecutors 80 percent of the time. Similar practices are used in 20 states and federal trials.

When a group of unscrupulous psychologists lobbied to add a slew of sexual disorders to last year's *DSM-5*—the definitive mental health manual—they revealed the toxic relationship between psychology and prosecution. If paraphiliac coercive disorder, hypersexuality and other suspect mental illnesses had been allowed to be listed, they would have become available for use in trial. "The civil commitment industry



and the psychologists it employs lobbied for these disorders so they could use them in testimony instead of shady 'unspecified' diagnoses," says Karen Franklin, a forensic psychologist in California. Assigning a defendant an "unspecified" diagnosis is a practice employed by co-opted psychologists to justify detention of offenders without legitimate mental illnesses. Having the disorders they proposed officially recognized in the *DSM* would provide even firmer ground for such convictions, but the disorders are not recognized by the broader medical community and "didn't even end up becoming 'conditions for further study,'" Franklin says, evidence of their tenuous scientific standing. When psychologists lobby for diagnoses as shady as these to be listed in the definitive mental health manual of our age, one can be sure their intentions are far from honest.

Twenty thousand sex offenders are released from our prisons every year. No-where has psychology become more removed from its fundamental principles than in the post-incarceration treatment of these offenders. The vast majority are required to undergo mental health treatment, and while community safety can and should be held as these programs' utmost goal, psychology is corrupted by law-enforcement aims. This means little is done to address the roots of criminal behavior or to protect communities. "Judges and citizens mistake these treatments for psychotherapy," says Phil Taylor, who spent 20 years as a licensed treatment provider. "It is not treatment. It is police work."

Post-release law-enforcement supervision masquerades as therapy in the "containment model," whereby therapists and polygraphers share information about

patients with officers. It is often provided by companies that exist solely to fulfill treatment contracts, which is obviously a perverse financial incentive. Confidentiality is signed away, refusal to cooperate is a jailable offense, and patients are subjected to treatment that would never be tolerated in private practice.

"When states certify practitioners, and definitions and prescriptions come under the control of politically beholden agencies," says Taylor, "there is an inexorable drift toward treatment as punishment and treatment as post-adjudication inquisition."

It is akin to assuming anyone convicted of theft is recidivist and worthy of the same mode of rehabilitation. The containment model lumps together a diverse population of convicts and fails to rehabilitate them. Long-standing evidence-based treatment models could bring real help to these patients, but they are failed by an overzealous state.

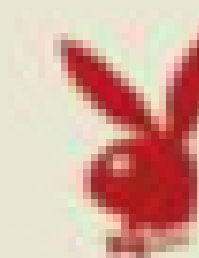
With 7 million Americans under law-enforcement supervision, the demand for mental health services has never been greater. But professional objectivity and the goals of psychology have been abandoned in pursuit of lucrative contracts.

These compromises set dangerous precedents for the future of mental health policy. They fail to reduce recidivism, fail to promote public safety and fail to alleviate incarceration rates. To promote true public safety, they must be addressed across disciplines and through broader cultural conversations. Until then, the lowest bidder wins. ■

Galen Baughman was convicted in 2004 of a sex offense with a minor at the age of 19 and served nine years in prison. He is now an advocate against the civil commitment model and co-founder of the Center for Sexual Justice with psychotherapist Andrew Extein.

**"There is an
inexorable
drift toward
treatment as
punishment."**

**LUCRATIVE CONTRACTS ARE MOTIVATION TO
KEEP OFFENDERS AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.**



READER RESPONSE

families across our country eat. We are tribes who look at the land as sacred and part of our very being. We are moms and dads who look at our kids and have no choice but to stand up and fight the pipeline.

In December, *PLAYBOY* ran a brilliant article about the people fighting tar-sands oil in their communities ("Don't Drill on Me"). I work with farmers, ranchers, tribes and other citizens to stop the Keystone pipeline from threatening our land and water. Communities in Michigan, Arkansas and elsewhere are feeling the devastating impact of what happens when tar-sands corporations view us



as just a line on a map and a line item in their budget. These big, often foreign corporations think if they spend enough money we will simply go away. But with media coverage and tools such as Twitter and Facebook, we are connecting with one another to show our faces and to stand up for our land and water. Small beer companies like Bell's Brewery in Michigan and small-batch distilleries like Cut Spike in Nebraska rely on clean water for their livelihoods. There's a saying I think is apt: Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting. I hope tar-sands corporations get the message real quick, because we are in this fight to win.

Jane Kleeb
Hastings, Nebraska

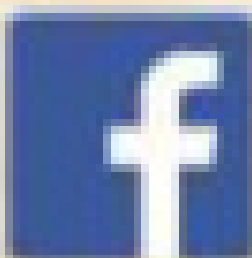
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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: TONY HSIEH

A candid conversation with the visionary CEO of Zappos about reinventing online shopping, turning Las Vegas into a utopia and why he hates shoes

Markets rise and fall, but one thing is certain: Tony Hsieh is having way more fun at work than the rest of us. His résumé says “CEO of Zappos.com,” the online retailer, but Hsieh (pronounced “Shay”) could easily dub himself High Priest of Happiness or even Partier in Chief. No meeting is too serious for Tony (first names only, please, among Zapponians) to break out shots of Grey Goose or to introduce, say, a guy in a hot-dog suit who comes in doing backflips (this actually happened).

Wackiness aside, business is booming. The shoe and clothing website was topping \$1 billion in annual merchandising sales when Amazon acquired Zappos in 2009. Now the customer-service-focused company is reportedly more than twice as rich, though it no longer discloses revenue. At the same time, Hsieh, 40, is investing \$350 million of personal pocket change to revitalize the bleak downtown Las Vegas neighborhood surrounding Zappos headquarters. Real estate, restaurants, tech start-ups, a school, a health center, arts, music, even a 40-foot metal praying mantis that breathes fire during a nightly drum circle—it’s all part of Hsieh’s new urban utopia.

Anthony Chia-Hua Hsieh was born December 12, 1973 in Urbana, Illinois to hard-working Taiwanese immigrants who later moved to California’s Bay Area to work even

harder. Tony’s dad was a chemical engineer and his mom a social worker; they demanded excellence from Tony and his younger brothers, Andy and David. A prestigious Marin County private school paved the way to Harvard, where Hsieh studied computer science but barely went to class. Fortune found him anyway. Campus jobs led to computing jobs and a tech start-up of his own, a banner-ad aggregator called LinkExchange, which Microsoft bought for \$265 million when Hsieh was 24. In 1999 he nearly deleted a voice-mail message from a guy looking for investors in an online store called ShoeSite.com, which eventually became the Zappos of internet success stories. Today the company makes nearly every list of best places to work, though Hsieh remains just another guy in a Zappos T-shirt one cubicle over. He even answers phones sometimes in the company’s 24/7 call center.

Contributing Editor David Hochman, who last interviewed comic-book icon Stan Lee, hung out with Hsieh in downtown Vegas for several days at Zappos headquarters and at the Ogden, where Hsieh lives alone in a sprawling condo almost always open to employees and friends. The man Hochman encountered surprised him. “You go in expecting Tony Robbins or even Ronald McDonald because of the rah-rah corporate

culture,” Hochman says. “But Tony is shy to the point of being awkward and much more an observer than a showboat. Then again, there’s enough mirth-making around Zappos—the name is short for zapatos, the Spanish word for shoes—to make work a fiesta, even if Hsieh doesn’t say a thing.”

PLAYBOY: Tutu Tuesdays, Kilt Fridays, Godzilla-size bottles of vodka everywhere. How does anyone get anything done around here?

HSIEH: You get used to it. When there’s an employee parade coming through the office or someone from finance brings a horse up to the 10th floor for Chinese New Year, it’s just another day at Zappos. You learn to adapt. It’s all about framing, really. When you need to party, you party. When you need to produce, you produce. And by the way, it’s the Year of the Horse.

PLAYBOY: Whatever happened to nose to the grindstone?

HSIEH: Work isn’t about being chained to your desk, staring at a screen. What we’re focused on is employee engagement. Plenty of studies show that the more engaged employees are, the happier and more productive they are.



“When you need to party, you party. When you need to produce, you produce. Work isn’t about being chained to your desk, staring at a screen. The more engaged employees are, the happier and more productive they are.”



“Most companies are organized from high to low, where a boss commands people, whereas a holacracy operates less like a bureaucratic institution. In a pure holacracy, you do away with all job titles, managers and levels.”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIUS BUGGE

“I can’t keep up with all the new social media stuff, but I’m already hearing kids in high school comment that Twitter is for old people. People forget how early on things are in terms of digital technology.”

And the best predictors of engagement are things like whether you have a best friend at work and how much freedom you have on the job. It's a powerful thing to know you can turn your work space into a tiki lounge and invite everybody to happy hour at five o'clock.

PLAYBOY: What's to prevent employees from being wasted all the time?

HSIEH: We trust our employees to use good judgment, which 99.9 percent of them do. We'd rather not create policies to address the 0.1 percent at the cost of fun for the other 99.9.

At our quarterly merchandising-awards ceremony this year, people showed up early to grab a beer or wine. Then we spent an hour recognizing the people who met their sales numbers. We watched a few *SNL*-type skits some employees put together, and then we had happy hour afterward a block away.

PLAYBOY: Work hard, play hard?

HSIEH: Why not? We also encourage managers to spend 10 to 20 percent of their time outside the office with their team and the people they work with. When new managers hear this, they go, "What? How? Why? Where?" It's one of those bad habits we have to untrain out of our employees. And productivity and efficiency go up anywhere from 20 to 100 percent. It's because communication within departments is better and people are willing to do favors for each other, not just as co-workers but as friends.

PLAYBOY: Your employees must be hooking up like crazy. Do you have to police the office nap rooms?

HSIEH: We've had quite a few Zappos marriages, but again, we trust our employees. Our nap rooms are for resting.

Listen, if you're not enjoying work, what's the point? Prior to Zappos, I co-founded a company called LinkExchange back in 1996 and grew it to about 100 employees before selling it to Microsoft two and a half years later. A lot of people don't know the real reason we sold the company: It ended up not being a fun place to work anymore. When we were smaller, in the early days, it was super exciting and fun. We were hiring friends and friends of friends. Then at some point we ran out of friends and had to hire people based on interviews and résumés, which we had never done before. We were fresh out of school, and work suddenly became a job. I dreaded getting out of bed in the morning, even though it was my company. That's a terrible situation, and it's why we got out.

PLAYBOY: You left \$8 million on the table by not sticking around with Microsoft that first year as your contract stipulated. That had to hurt.

HSIEH: It would have hurt a lot more to waste my life waiting for the money. Trust me, I still walked away with more money than I'll ever need for the rest of my life. [Editor's note: Hsieh received \$32 million.] But it was a philosophical shift too. We'd

been offered millions before and always held out for more. But while hanging around after the sale, I thought about all the things I wanted to be creating and experiencing. That's when I decided to stop chasing the money and start chasing the passion.

PLAYBOY: Following your passion is easy when you're sitting on millions. What if someone's out of work? They need to chase the cash.

HSIEH: I think it's hard to give universal advice, because it depends on your expenses, how much savings you have, your work experience. But when you're out of work, it's essential to focus on your interests and passions. Sometimes when I speak at a conference, people ask me what's a good market to get into where they can make a lot of money. My advice to them is, rather than having money be your primary motivator, think about what you'd be happy doing for 10 years even if you didn't make a cent. That's what you should be doing. I think if you do that, ironically, it'll greatly increase your chances of making more money, because your enthusiasm will rub off on

I have zero interest in shoes. If anything, I have negative interest in shoes. And fashion. My outfit is the same every day: a Zappos T-shirt, jeans and sneakers.

employees and customers and have this ripple effect on your whole business.

PLAYBOY: You must be really passionate about shoes.

HSIEH: I have zero interest in shoes. If anything, I have negative interest in shoes. And fashion. My outfit is the same every day: a Zappos T-shirt, jeans and sneakers. What happened was I formed an investment company with my happy little core group of friends. We invested in about 20 different companies, and things went great for a minute, but pretty quickly I got bored again. I felt I was sitting on the sidelines. I missed building something. Of all the investments we had, Zappos was both the most promising and, more important, the company with the people I liked the best. I joined full-time within that first year and have been here ever since.

PLAYBOY: Is there any advantage in not being in Silicon Valley or some other tech center?

HSIEH: Zappos started in San Francisco, and in 2004 we decided to relocate to the Las Vegas area. Seventy people moved with us. We're a customer-service com-

pany, and it was really hard finding people in San Francisco who wanted to do customer service as a career. Vegas is service-focused 24/7, so we knew it would fit with our core values.

PLAYBOY: Core values?

HSIEH: We have 10 core values that serve as a formalized definition of our company culture, and everything is driven by those ideals. They bond us like a family; they guide us through good times and bad. Some of our core values: Embrace and drive change. Build open and honest relationships with communication. Be passionate and determined. Be adventurous. Be open-minded. Embrace growth and learning. Have fun. Be humble.

PLAYBOY: Value number one is to deliver "wow." What does that mean exactly?

HSIEH: When you think about getting a "wow" reaction from someone, it shifts your attitude. You can't just do things the expected way to get a wow. You have to go above and beyond. You're going for spine tingling, earthshaking. You're shooting for emotional impact. It's why we have this thing in our call centers called PEC, or personal emotional connection. You don't want to think of your customer as a dollar sign. You want to truly and authentically connect to their humanity. That's why our reps have the freedom to send flowers or handwritten notes or cookies just as a friendly thank-you or follow-up. It's why one employee spent 10 hours on the phone with a customer in 2012.

PLAYBOY: Ten hours?

HSIEH: A little longer than 10, actually. I have no idea what they talked about for all that time, but I don't need to know. What matters is that our people go the extra mile. I'll call Zappos sometimes if I need an answer for something. If I'm with a bunch of friends at a bar and there's a question we can't answer, we'll call Zappos and ask. I shouldn't tell people that, but it's true. If you're looking for a great pizza place near you or want to know how many seats are in the theater you happen to be walking past, maybe give Zappos a call. You'll be amazed when the person answering actually makes an effort. Our reps don't have quotas. They don't have scripts. They never up-sell.

PLAYBOY: Remind us again why you don't go bankrupt doing things this way.

HSIEH: Interestingly enough, most phone calls that come in don't result in an immediate order. Somebody might want to see if they can get something delivered by tomorrow or if we have a shoe in a certain color. They're not calling to buy something. What matters is using each interaction with a customer to build a customer-service brand, to let our reps shine in each interaction. That way, we're creating a moment, a memorable and favorable experience, and yes, that does bring customers back for more.

PLAYBOY: The promise of the internet was that we'd all be working remotely from hammocks somewhere and ordering

pizza with a click of a mouse. But your company culture demands that employees show up and stick around.

HSIEH: We've always taken the view that we have to physically be together from an employee perspective. People don't work as well remotely. The author Steven Johnson writes about something called the "adjacent possible"—this notion that great ideas bubble up from unexpected places and random interactions over time. We want employees all in the same physical space to have more collisions. In fact, we've done weird things to prioritize collisions over convenience.

PLAYBOY: I assume you're not talking about car crashes.

HSIEH: Here's the idea. Maybe 15 or so years ago I used to throw a lot of parties. I noticed that when you have multiple bars, it always works best if you shut down the first bar during the first hour. Trust me, people will always find the alcohol. Then an hour later, open that first bar again, and it promotes circulation. It's a simple strategy, but people don't do it. It led me at Zappos to think about how to get employees to circulate and run into each other.

PLAYBOY: And you call yourself an introvert?

HSIEH: Yes, but I like to surround myself with extroverts. I can't explain why. It's definitely harder for me to make small talk and interact the way some people do, so I guess I had to build it into the program. For instance, in our new building everyone enters through a central courtyard plaza, which becomes a daily congestion point. You see almost everybody in the company at some point every day. Also, there used to be a sky bridge from a parking garage leading to the former city hall where our office is now. The city employees all used to park and walk across the bridge and into the building. When we moved in, we shut down that bridge, which forces all the employees out into the streets. That builds connection not just within the company but between Zappos and the surrounding neighborhood and city.

PLAYBOY: You recently declared Zappos a holacracy. First, congratulations! Second, what's a holacracy?

HSIEH: Holacracy is a different way of organizing a company. Most companies are organized from high to low, where a boss commands people and so on, whereas a holacracy operates more like an urban environment and less like a bureaucratic institution. Everyone is together, and yet they don't order each other around. In a pure holacracy, you do away with all job titles, managers and levels. We're still experimenting with the form, and it will have a unique Zappos flavor, but the key is to enable employees to act more like entrepreneurs. Instead of being told what to do by managers, we trust that employees will know what needs to be accomplished and then figure out the best way to make that happen.

It's always a concern as a company grows—and we're approaching 2,000 employees—that you remain innovative. When companies get bigger, productivity and innovation per employee generally go down. From the Zappos perspective, we're trying to avoid that fate. So the model we're using isn't a corporate one. Rather, it's the city. Every time the size of a city doubles, innovation and productivity increase by 15 percent.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of cities, you've invested \$350 million of your own money to revitalize a forlorn area of downtown Las Vegas. That's a huge bet.

HSIEH: People hear the \$350 million number and think it's a phenomenal risk. But Downtown Project is about 300 different projects going on simultaneously. Roughly \$50 million goes to small businesses to help build a sense of neighborhood and community; \$50 million goes to tech start-ups; \$50 million goes into arts, education, music and health care, and then \$200 million goes to real estate.

PLAYBOY: But you don't have any experience in urban planning.

*Our goal is to make
downtown Vegas a place of
inspiration and innovation.
What we're trying to do is
the TED conference meets
SXSW meets Burning Man.*

HSIEH: That's right. None. Up until three years ago nothing related to urban planning was even on my radar. I had about as much interest in it as I did in shoes, but I've always loved thinking about how people interact.

We focus on what we refer to as the three Cs: collisions, as I've described, plus co-learning and connectedness. A lot of urban revitalization projects depend on having an expensive sports team or stadium or a Harvard or Stanford, but not every community can have that. We're thinking about relatively simple concepts, such as how to get more people colliding with each other or how to help people learn together in interesting ways. We initiated something called Learning Village. Anyone can go in and take part in whatever theme we have on a particular week. Because our population is creative and entrepreneurial, we might offer something fashion-focused where we hear from emerging designers, or we'll have a week devoted to tech. It's like we're throwing a mini conference every single week.

PLAYBOY: A city is not a conference,

though. One criticism of Downtown Project is that it doesn't address real urban issues such as homelessness, public transportation and affordable housing. Yes, you have a retail village made of super-cool shipping containers, but what about a decent neighborhood supermarket?

HSIEH: Yeah. I guess the simplest answer is we're not the government and we're not trying to solve every problem. I will say it's challenging at times. I come from a tech background; I'm used to being able to go from an idea to launch in 24 hours. Here, everything's much slower. Building buildings takes time. Everything is a process, so you stick to your goals. Our goal with Downtown Project is to help make downtown Vegas a place of inspiration, creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation, discovery and upward mobility. Over time I hope we can expand our scope, but right now we're focused on helping accelerate the number of people from the creative class and entrepreneurs on both the small-business side and technology side to this area. What we're trying to do is the TED conference meets SXSW meets Burning Man.

PLAYBOY: Downtown Project took over the old Gold Spike casino but replaced all the gaming tables and slot machines with pool tables and games like cornhole. Are you not a gambler?

HSIEH: No.

PLAYBOY: Weren't you once a serious poker player?

HSIEH: I don't consider playing poker to be gambling. It's not a game where the house wins. I did play in the World Series of Poker once, but that was way before it was famous.

PLAYBOY: Give us some pointers on winning.

HSIEH: Well, you need to define what you mean by winning. Is your goal to make money? Is your goal to have a good time? Is your goal to build relationships? Is your goal to build a certain brand or persona? If you walk into a random casino, it's probably to make money, so you can break it down from there. Let's say you do make money; you can break down how long you spent playing and how enjoyable it was. Or did you feel you were just grinding it out? If I play poker at a tech conference, depending on who else is playing, it's a good way to get casual face time with someone and build a relationship. Even if I lose money, I'm still winning.

PLAYBOY: What if your goal is simply not to lose your shirt?

HSIEH: Then don't play. But if you can't help yourself, realize that poker is very similar to business. Don't play if you don't understand it. If you're not winning at your table, you have to think about switching to another table. If there are too many competitors, even if you're good, success is going to be harder. Don't cheat. Be patient. Be humble. Be nice. Be prepared for the worst. And the guy

who wins the most hands isn't the guy who makes the most money in the end. Also, have fun. You don't want to be up all night worrying.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of that, you're running a billion-dollar company in addition to overseeing a huge urban renewal program. When do you sleep?

HSIEH: I basically don't sleep. I have meetings from eight A.M. to 10 P.M. almost every day. I split my time pretty much 50-50 between Zappos and Downtown Project, which works out to around 60 hours a week on each.

PLAYBOY: What does that equal in Red Bull ounces?

HSIEH: I've actually switched from Red Bull to coffee almost completely, though I do like fernet on occasion.

PLAYBOY: Fernet?

HSIEH: It's an Italian liqueur I've introduced to a lot of people. Definitely an acquired taste. I didn't like it when I first tried it, but my pitch to friends is that it's a "healthy" alcohol. It's flavored with herbs including ginseng, myrrh and chamomile. It tastes and smells like Chinese medicine, but it's a digestif, so 60 seconds after you drink it, it coats your stomach and helps get rid of any nausea. I like to experiment with my liquor.

PLAYBOY: Is it true that when you were writing your number-one best-selling business book, *Delivering Happiness*, you ate coffee beans drenched in vodka to write faster?

HSIEH: Yes. I found it was easy to write once I was in the mood, but it was hard to get in the mood. So I tried various things based on feedback from writer friends. Vodka first, then coffee and then, yes, I actually soaked coffee beans in the vodka. But I found the most effective technique was taking Excedrin when I didn't have a headache because there's actually a lot of caffeine in Excedrin. I ended up writing the whole book in about two weeks' time.

PLAYBOY: Were you always so driven?

HSIEH: I always fantasized about making money because I knew it would give me the freedom to do whatever I wanted to do. I was always doing little businesses. I started a worm-farming business when I was nine, which went okay until all the worms escaped. I tried other things, but what took off was a button-making business I advertised in the back of a magazine. I was the Asian kid making around \$200 a month in middle school from that.

PLAYBOY: Is there truth to the tiger-parent stereotype?

HSIEH: I think there's some truth to it in my case, certainly. I grew up in Marin County, and we were one of the few Asian families among mostly white people. My parents emigrated from Taiwan. My dad's an engineer. My parents definitely pushed me a little harder toward traditional success. For instance, in middle school, in addition to running my button business and having to get straight A's, I had to

play four musical instruments—violin, trumpet, French horn and piano—and I had to practice half an hour a day on weekdays and an hour a day on weekends on each instrument.

PLAYBOY: You write in your book that you sometimes faked your way out of practicing. Instead of playing the piano, you would play back an hour-long session you'd recorded earlier. Did you eventually get caught?

HSIEH: The funny thing is my parents didn't know about that until they read the book. It was the part I was most nervous about them reading, even after all these years. I felt like I was back in middle school, afraid I was going to get in trouble. But then my mom said, "Oh, I know that didn't really happen and you just wrote that to make it sound interesting." I was saved!

PLAYBOY: You also said you almost never went to class as an undergrad at Harvard. How did that work?

HSIEH: Well, freshman year I skipped a lot of classes. I guess it depended on the class and if there were notes available afterward. You see, I invited my

I always fantasized about making money because I knew it would give me the freedom to do whatever I wanted to do. I started a worm-farming business when I was nine.

fellow students to participate in a study group and was able to compile a study guide for classes that I then distributed and sold for \$20 each. I'd assign topics to students, and you could buy one only if you had contributed research to it. I never really had to open a book because I had these comprehensive guides that were completely aboveboard.

PLAYBOY: What life lessons came from running a student pizza grill at Harvard, aside from the fact that your best customer, Alfred Lin, later became your chief operating officer at Zappos?

HSIEH: Just like anything else, to get proficient at something, whether it's playing piano, playing a sport or being an entrepreneur, you need to put in 10,000 hours of practice. Running the pizza business helped me get closer to that 10,000 hours faster.

PLAYBOY: New subject. Let's say someone has \$5,000 to invest. Any tips?

HSIEH: The first question to ask is, why are you investing? Even if the answer is "To make money," ask yourself why. Maybe you'll find out what you really want is to make money so you can travel around

the world. If that's your dream, take the money and spend it on a plane ticket. So many people have these "one day" conversations. One day I'm going to quit my job. One day I'm going to become a writer. One day I'm going to Paris. But then they're so busy working, they never get there. I'd go so far as to say that if you have a great business idea, it might be worth spending the money you'd invest in college on starting the idea right now.

PLAYBOY: Again, that's easy for a guy with a Harvard diploma to say.

HSIEH: I don't think college needs to be the instant default. Maybe it's more important to expose yourself to a lot of different things and people first and do stuff outside your comfort zone. So many people stay on the predictable, comfortable path. That's boring. There's a great quote by Jim Collins, who said when it comes to business, "good is the enemy of great." When things are just good enough, you're cutting yourself off from getting to that next level.

PLAYBOY: Amazon acquired Zappos in 2009 for \$1.2 billion in stock. Brad Stone's book on Amazon recounts the fierce tactics Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos used to negotiate, including lowball acquisition offers and pricing shoes lower on Amazon to pressure you into selling.

HSIEH: I haven't read that book, but I think the acquisition went down the best possible path given the variables and circumstances. Ours was different from most of Amazon's other acquisitions, where the plan is for the company being acquired to integrate with the parent company. Amazon buys you and you join the mother ship. We told them we'd consider doing the deal only if Zappos could remain independent, which we are. We needed to retain our own brand, our own culture, our own way of doing business, and all that's separate from the rest of Amazon. They accepted that. It's been almost five years now, and they remain true to their word. From our point of view it's basically as if we swapped our previous board of directors with a new one. Then on top of that we get access to all this free technology from Amazon.

PLAYBOY: And now you get to hang out with Jeff Bezos too. What's he like?

HSIEH: I don't know him that well. I probably see him randomly, I would guess, once a year for less than five minutes. But I will say Amazon's success has been amazing and the marriage has worked well for us.

PLAYBOY: Is there a company whose success baffles you?

HSIEH: Snapchat. They turned down \$3 billion from Facebook. I just wonder how they pay their bills and what their business model is. I'm not saying they don't have one. I just can't imagine what it is. I'm not behind the scenes, so I don't know anything. It's more just curiosity.

PLAYBOY: Is Google too powerful?

HSIEH: Google is interesting because it's a monopoly, (continued on page 112)

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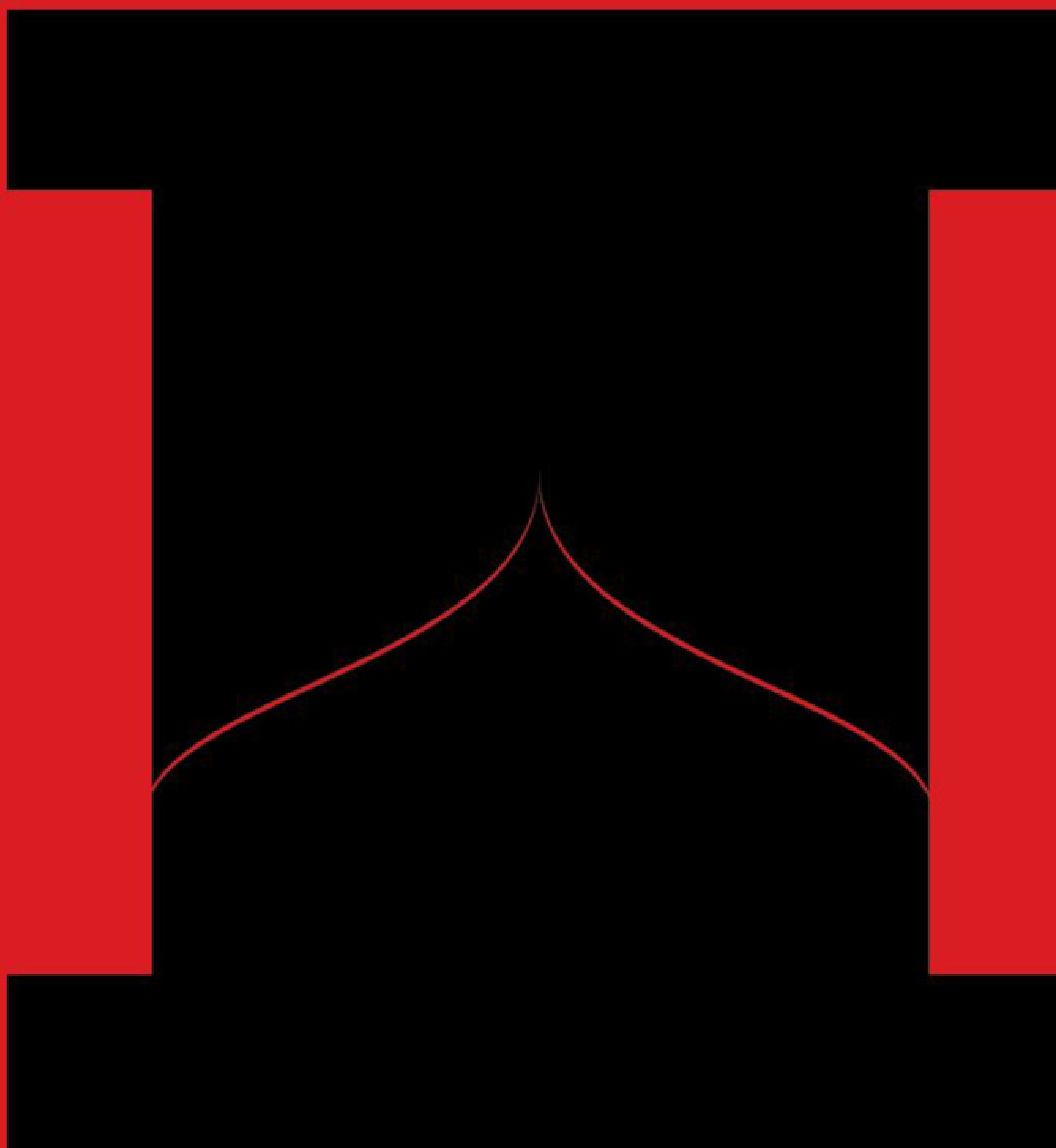
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MEET THE HACKERS WHO ATTACK TARGET AND OTHER U.S. COMPANIES. WHO ARE THEY? WHAT DO THEY WANT? THE ANSWERS WILL SCARE YOU



In an empty Japanese restaurant on the northeast outskirts of Moscow, Nikita Kislitsin, a 28-year-old Russian with blond hair, blue eyes and translucent skin, is showing me how to pull off a multimillion-dollar cyberheist on his MacBook Air. The ace hacker is methodical; his slim fingers click quickly through a series of applications to activate a virtual private network that will blur our real location from prying eyes.

“Which IP address should we use?” Kislitsin asks. Kislitsin was the editor in chief of Russia’s *Hacker* magazine for six years before taking a job with Group-IB, a private Russian internet-security firm. We peruse a list of half a dozen international locales like a pair of newlyweds pick-

ing through possible honeymoon destinations. “Chicago,” I decide—and with one click we’ve transported ourselves from Russia’s capital to America’s heartland. Now, with our location cloaked, we can operate on the fringes of the law with impunity.

While pulling off online larceny

: BY SARAH A. TOPOL

requires strategy, the tools to do it are readily available for a reasonable fee. Kislitsin logs on to several hidden forums and scans the Russian-language conversation threads. We’re looking for a good deal on a Trojan: a program that infects computers and forces them to perform unauthorized actions, extracting all

manner of personal data and transmitting it back to the program's command-and-control server, like a droid seeking out the mother ship. The computer then becomes part of a vast botnet, a network of infected computers whose information—such as account balances and passwords—shows up on the hacker's dashboard. Armed with this info, criminals can filter out victims to rob and begin to drain their accounts. Kislitsin shows me one dashboard Group-IB hacked into on which a cybercriminal had made his own handy notes. Next to infected computers he'd listed account balances, "password incorrect," "missing login" and several notes of *bomj* (Russian for "homeless"), a reference to someone too poor to be worth robbing.

Once a computer is compromised, the next step of the heist is taking money out of an account. A favorite lifting method is *autozaliv* (Russian computer slang for "autotheft"), which requires a separate program that can be bought on the same forum. When you log on to your banking profile, the hacker can see that you're online. Through the *autozaliv* program, the hacker directs your computer to automatically wire your money into another account. In some cases the hacker even obtains control of your laptop's online banking screen so that when you look at your account, you see the balance you were expecting—but the money is already gone. It's only when you try to pay a bill or go to an ATM that the bank will notify you that you have insufficient funds. Your money is long gone.

The stolen funds are now snaking their way across the world through a network of people known as money mules, whose services can also be bought on the forum. It is a separate criminal network that specializes in illicit courier services, organizing all the stops—and there are quite a few—the money will make before it lands in the hands of the



cybercriminal. From the victim's account the lucre is sent to another American bank account. Sometimes the mules are Eastern Europeans studying in America who are in on the scam; other times the mules are down-on-their-luck Americans who responded to online ads about making money from home. Typically the ad claims a foreign company working in the U.S. needs an American business partner to help it collect its money. For a percentage, the American uses his or her own bank account to collect wire payments for "services rendered" and then sends the money through Western Union to the "company" on the other side of the Atlantic.



Above: "Seroga," a Russian hacker who brags on YouTube about his cars to show how profitable cybertheft can be. **Below:** Nikita Kislitsin works for the good guys, trying to stop his countrymen from plundering America.

The recipient across the ocean is possibly as clueless or as desperate as the American on U.S. soil. He or she picks up the wire transfer and

sends the cash onward to the actual hacker. Kislitsin tells me the Western Union collector could be a poor grandmother in Ukraine who collects the funds with her real passport, packs a television set with bundles of cash, perhaps for a salary of about \$200 a week, and physically sends it on its way to the original hacker. One way, he noted, is to cross borders on a train. The train attendant charged with moving the package probably doesn't know he's delivering a hollow television set stuffed with cash. The money-mule network takes 50 percent of the stolen funds as its cut.

From desktops to laptops to mobile phones and tablets, the reach of cybercrime is growing at an alarming rate. On forums like the ones Kislitsin is showing me, anyone can buy hundreds of stolen credit card numbers, malware (programs that clandestinely enter a computer and damage or hijack its operations—a Trojan is a kind of malware), viruses, space on bulletproof hosting servers (online domains maintained by dubious companies that will not shut them down despite nefarious activities such as child porn and drug scores), money-mule services and much more.

There are many ways to pull off cyberheists that don't involve hacking into victims' bank accounts via their computers. From producing fake debit cards to drain ATMs to stealing credit card numbers and shopping online, the opportunities for cybercrime are as ubiquitous as the technology that has crept into our daily routine.

At a private cybersecurity conference in New York last August, then FBI director Robert S. Mueller cautioned, "In the future, the cyberthreat will equal or even eclipse the terrorist threat." The more connected the world becomes, the greater the risk (continued on page 120)

THOSE WITH THE KNOW-HOW CAN PILFER A SINGLE MOM'S LIFE SAVINGS, BUT A LOCAL GYM OWNER'S CAPITAL, HIT SMALL BUSINESSES OR GO AFTER BIGGER FISH SUCH AS SONY OR HOME DEPOT.



"A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Silverstein."



A PLACE II

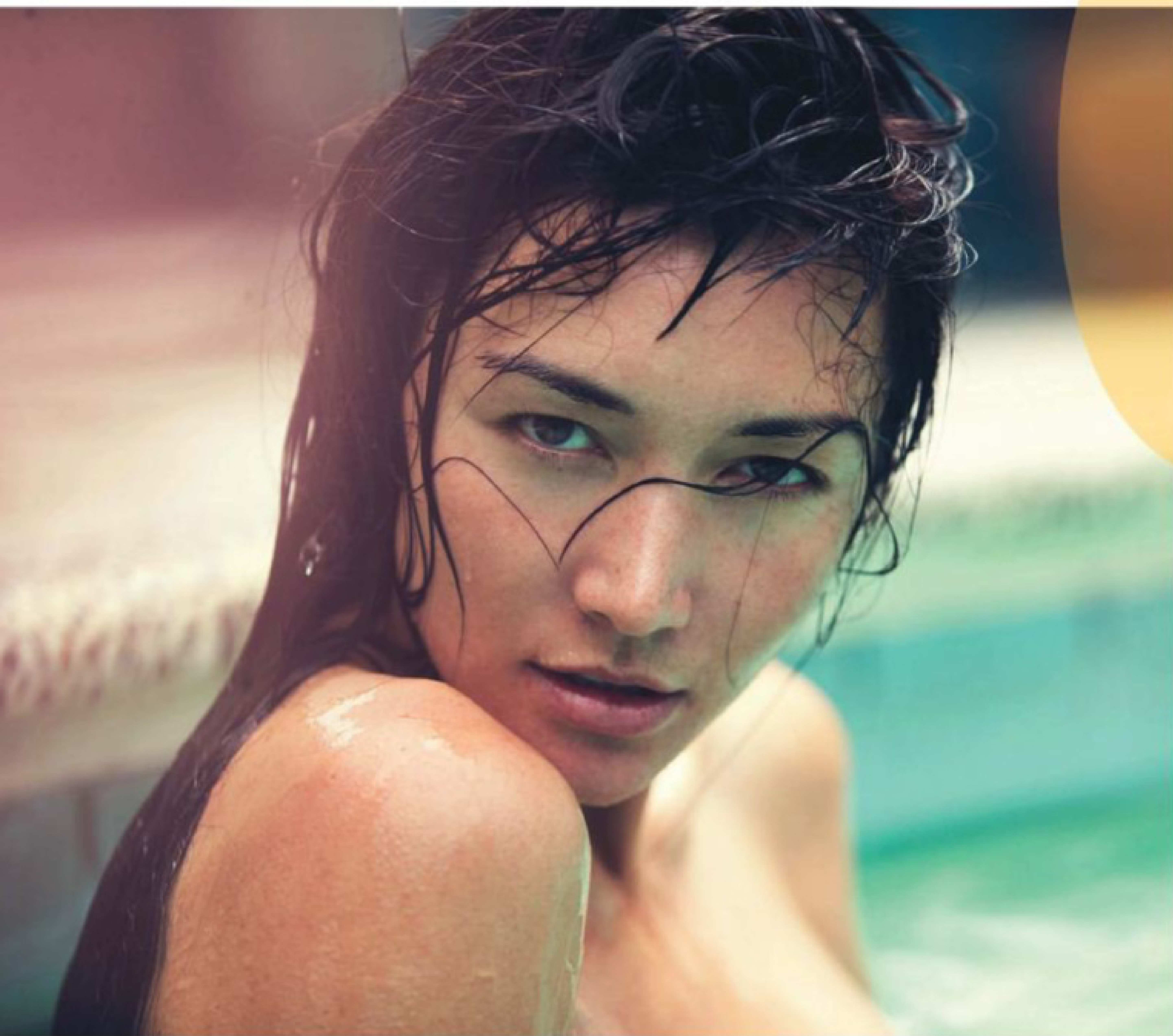
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BELLEMERE



*MONIQUE JACQUELINE SOAKS UP RAYS AND GIVES OFF
HEAT ON A CLOUDLESS CALIFORNIA AFTERNOON*

V THE SUN





God damn you half-Japanese girls/Do it to me every time," sings Rivers Cuomo on Weezer's "El Scorcho." Indeed. The allure of Monique Jacqueline—a woman of such lineage—plus the eye of photographer David Bellemere created the perfect setting for a photo shoot, where the sun and shadows played across Monique's body. "Only one word can describe him: *inspired*," Monique says. "David Bellemere is a sculptor of life, light and the human form." Monique's secret ambition is to take her human form to the big screen and become the next action starlet.







**A SWIRLING HURRICANE OF ANIMAL, MAN, MACHINE,
DUST, PANDEMONIUM AND POSSIBLY EVEN DEATH.
ON THE RUN WITH THE MOST EXCITING—AND
DANGEROUS—HORSE RACE IN THE WORLD**

THEY CALL IT

EL BRAVO

BY SEAN MANNING

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY
LUIZ MAXIMIANO**



AD





he pole juts up from Mi Santa's back, held in place by a rope tied under the mare's belly. Bags of saline soak in a bucket of warm water. "It's better if the saline goes in warm," explains Ignacio "Nacho" Cardozo, the horse's co-owner. He hangs the bag on the pole and connects it to the IV in Mi Santa's neck. Another member of her entourage, or "stud," holds her by the reins.

When the bag is half empty, Nacho cuts off a corner with his knife. Using a large syringe, he squirts in liquids that turn the saline from clear to pink to yellow. The bags read ELECTROLYTES, REHYDRATE, METABOLISM. Nacho will repeat this process for the seven other bags of saline—in total more than two gallons of fluid.

Eight men make up the stud, including Nacho, Leo Ruiz and Nacho's older brother Marcos. They arrived in the small, 5,000-person city of José Pedro Varela earlier in the day, driving two hours south from their hometown of Melo. They are in their late 20s to mid-30s, except for one 14-year-old errand boy. All of them are crowded into the tiny stall, made even more cramped by Nacho's imposing size. If this were America, he'd be playing defensive end in the NFL.

The stall has plank walls, a metal roof and a single lightbulb that gives the space the warm glow of a Nativity scene. A few men sit in folding chairs. The rest stand or sit on the sawdust floor. They drink whiskey using only two glasses, passing them back and forth, as is the custom in Uruguay. Now and then they step outside to smoke.

The night is full of sounds—noise from the carnival in the city square, less than a mile away, barking dogs, passing

motorcycles, crickets, *cumbia* music on the battery-powered radio. The horse that usually occupies the stall snorts, upset at having been cast outside to the small corral. It's mid-October, early spring, and chilly enough that the horse is draped in a jacket.

The men discuss strategy.

"*Hay caballos que vienen a largar.*"

"*La yegua está bien entrenada.*"

"*Ciriaco los pela, pero hay unos cinco caballos que le van a dar pelea.*"

They are collectively optimistic about Mi Santa's chances of winning tomorrow's race. Or if not winning then at least finishing in the money. Looking at her, it's easy to see why. The nine-year-old *yegua* is all rippling muscle, with a lustrous brown coat, a handsome white stripe down the length of her nose and white rear ankles that give her added panache. There are standard equine terms for these white markings: blaze and half cannon. But on Mi Santa they look original, unprecedented. All horses are beautiful. Mi Santa is exquisite.

Around the fifth bag of saline, two men leave the stall for Nacho's truck, parked in the driveway. Two 200-gallon blue barrels take up most of the bed. The men fill the barrels with water from the garden hose, careful to do so quietly. The host family is already asleep, their small house dark and silent.

An hour later the saline is finished. Nacho removes the IV and swabs the incision. The pole is taken to the truck, along with Nacho's medical kit. The men pile into the truck bed, and Nacho drives them the few blocks back to the *salón comunal* for more drinking and eating. The pig that has been cooking since early afternoon is nearly ready.

The jockey, however, stays behind. His name is Maximiliano de Cunto. He is 28 and has been a jockey since he was 16. This will be his first time running Mi Santa. "She's the whole package," he says, "especially in her gallop, which is long and consistent." He takes Mi Santa for a short walk, guiding her along rutted dirt roads unlit by street lamps, past the single-story whitewashed houses with their log-and-wire fences, laundry-laden clotheslines, side-yard chicken coops and the occasional satellite dish. Her clip-clopping lingers in the brisk air.





2



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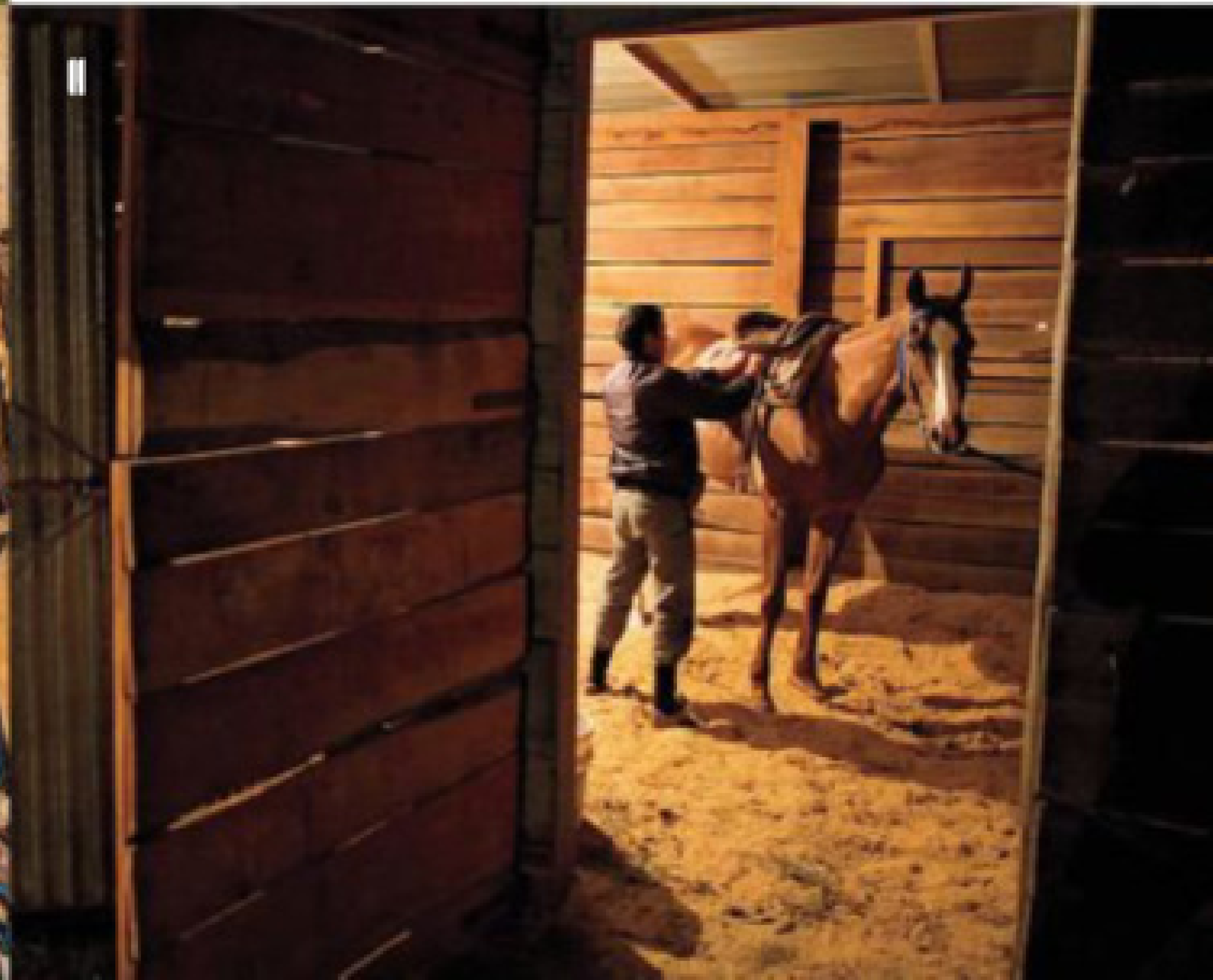
1. Crew members drench a horse to cool it down before the mandatory veterinary inspection halfway through the race; more than half the horses will drop out at this point. 2. Fans inspect the horses before the race. 3. Jockey Diego Prego and his horse. 4. Studs act as the horses' mobile pit crews. Loaded into trucks, they follow the race route, hosing down the horses to prevent overheating. 5. Horses are painted with numbers that correspond to placards displayed by their studs. 6. A horse and jockey ride free as dawn breaks along the 90-kilometer route. 7. The initial burst of El Raid is a hurricane of horses and vehicles. 8. The weekend of El Raid includes food, dancing and gambling. 9. A rare female jockey and her horse. 10. Gear inside the stable. 11. Jockey Maximiliano de Cunto saddles Mi Santa before dawn.



8



10



11



"I care a lot about the horses I ride," he says. "Like a good friend—that type of closeness. This is much more than just a profession to me."

Tomorrow Mi Santa and 50 other horses will sprint 60 miles across eastern Uruguay among a convoy of roughly 400 people piled into a battalion of pickup trucks, creating a swirling hurricane of thundering hooves, car crashes, blinding dust, utter pandemonium and possibly even death. It's been like this for more than a hundred years. They call it El Raid.

Endurance horse racing is said to have originated in 1955. That's when five Auburn, California businessmen and riding enthusiasts sought to prove the 100-mile journey between their hometown and Lake Tahoe could be completed on horseback within 24 hours. They succeeded, and the first Western States Trail Ride became an annual affair, growing in size each year. Now called the Tevis Cup, it remains the most famous endurance horse race in the world. More than 150 entrants, some from as far away as Japan and Australia, entered the 2013 race.

The Tevis Cup isn't shy about its legacy. Its website declares the Tevis "the oldest modern-day endurance ride" and "the inspiration and model for the most challenging endurance rides worldwide." In 2010 *The New York Times* proclaimed, "The modern-day sport of endurance riding began in the

1. A horse in distress collapses midway through the race. 2. Veterinarian Ruben Acosta Fernández inspects a horse before deciding whether to allow it to continue. 3. Nearly \$50,000 is wagered during the *remate* the night before the competition. 4. Members of a stud hose down a horse during El Raid. 5. Co-winners Diego Prego and José Gussoni cross the finish line. 6. Dancers the night before the race.

1950s in California." By then, El Raid had already been taking place in Uruguay for four decades.

Originally called El Raid Hípico (*el raid* referring to any long-distance sporting competition and *hípico* meaning "all things horse"), the first was held in 1913. The route ran roughly 90 kilometers (about 60 miles) in a round-trip between the town of Sarandí Grande and the city of Florida.

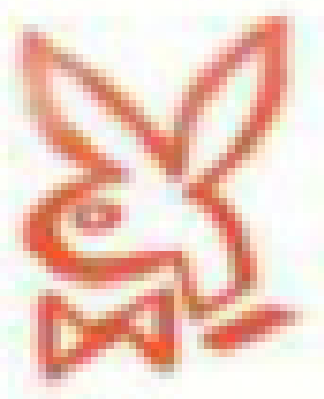
Thirteen horses participated. When the event was repeated the following year, the results were disastrous: Riders pushed their mounts so hard that only one horse survived.

As a result, the event was disbanded for more than two decades until it was revived in 1935 to commemorate the 110th anniversary of

the Battle of Sarandí, which helped Uruguay secure its independence from Brazil. By 1944 there were seven Raid clubs and a new governing body, the Federación Ecuestre Uruguaya. Today the Federación oversees 45 clubs, some with as many as 150 members subdivided into studs consisting of a horse's owners, jockey and trainers. Mi Santa is one of seven horses Nacho has part ownership in. All of them fall under the banner of Centro Raidista de Cerro (continued on page 114)

HORSES JOCKEY FOR POSITION; TRUCKS SWERVE, COLLIDE, BRAKE AND SPEED UP. IT'S PART KENTUCKY DERBY, PART DAYTONA 500.



Oivi 

"I thought you liked cartoons with cats and mice...!"



FICTION

EXTREME

THE NOIR MASTER TAKES SPORT TO NEW HEIGHTS IN THIS EXCLUSIVE SERIAL

PART

1

EXTREME (ADJ.) 1: GREAT OR INTENSE
2: NOT REASONABLE 3: FARTHEST OUT
4: SEVERE 5: SENSATION SEEKING.



For example: Kurt and Paige hold hands and jump off the Royal Gorge Bridge. This is great, intense, not reasonable, farthest out, severe and (definitely) sensation seeking. They plunge through the sky together like hawks in love. Mile-High Club,

bullshit. Try hurtling together through the sky at triple digits. Jump out of the plane, launch together through the open air, there's a reason they call it *falling* in love. Human beings have only two innate fears. Snakes and falling. Both come from our days in the trees.

Kurt and Paige.

Free-falling in love.

Adrenaline merge.

The Arkansas River is just under a thousand feet straight down (although Kurt would observe there is no such thing as *crooked* down) and you'd *better* fall straight because the gorge is narrow and if you miscalculate by even a little bit you're going to smash into its rock walls at 80 miles an hour.

(Limestone is considered a "soft" rock, but at 80 miles per hour there is no such thing as a soft rock.)

Two seconds after Kurt and Paige jump, they throw their arms and legs out into a double X shape to open the fabric of their wingsuits.

A wingsuit—a.k.a. a birdman suit, a bat suit and a flying-squirrel suit—is just what it sounds like. Basically a bag that makes a human being resemble a flying squirrel. Its fabric stretches out from under the arms and between the legs to increase surface area, which allows said human to glide through the air.

In technical terms, the suit increases the amount of lift as related to the amount of drag, creating a glide ratio of 2.5:1. Which is to say that the flier moves forward two and a half feet for every foot he or she drops. A free-falling parachutist descends through the air at speeds between 90 and 140 mph. Proper technique with a wingsuit slows you down to somewhere between 70 and 90 mph.

Now Paige and Kurt push their shoulders forward to gain velocity and straighten their legs to reduce drag. They tuck their chins into their necks for the same reason—reducing drag increases speed.

BY DON

WINSLOW

Words to live by.

BASE jumping off a bridge through a narrow gorge is dangerous, duh.

Tandem BASE jumping off a bridge through a narrow gorge is DD2 (dangerous duh, squared) because one partner can knock into the other, which at that speed and relatively low altitude could send both of them into an unrecoverable spin and smash them against the rocks.

Turning your wingsuit into a bag of (broken) bones.

It's STCKY. Pronounced *sticky*. (continued on page 102)



SWISS + MADE



OFFICIAL PARTNER

ESSENTIAL GEAR.

SXC Steel GMT No. 5127: 45.5mm, black PVD plated stainless steel case, screw down crown & case back, anti-reflective sapphire crystal, stainless steel bidirectional rotating bezel, GMT function for second time zone, genuine black leather strap with red contrast stitching and red lining, black PVD signature buckle, water resistant to 200 meters, and Luminox self-powered illumination. Swiss Made.

Preferred timepiece of SXC Astronauts and Test Pilots.

www.luminox.com

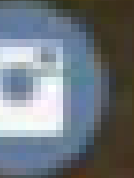
facebook.com/Luminox



Constant Glow for up to 25 Years.

*HERE COMES
THE SUN! AN ALL-
NIGHT BEACH
BACCHANAL
WITH MISS MAY
DANI MATHERS*

/MissDaniMathers 

@MissDaniMathers 

@DaniMathers 











MISS MAY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Dani Mathers

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Dani Matneers
 BUST: 33D WAIST: 23" HIPS: 31"
 HEIGHT: 5'1" WEIGHT: 100lbs.

BIRTH DATE: 1/5/1987 BIRTHPLACE: Tarzana, California

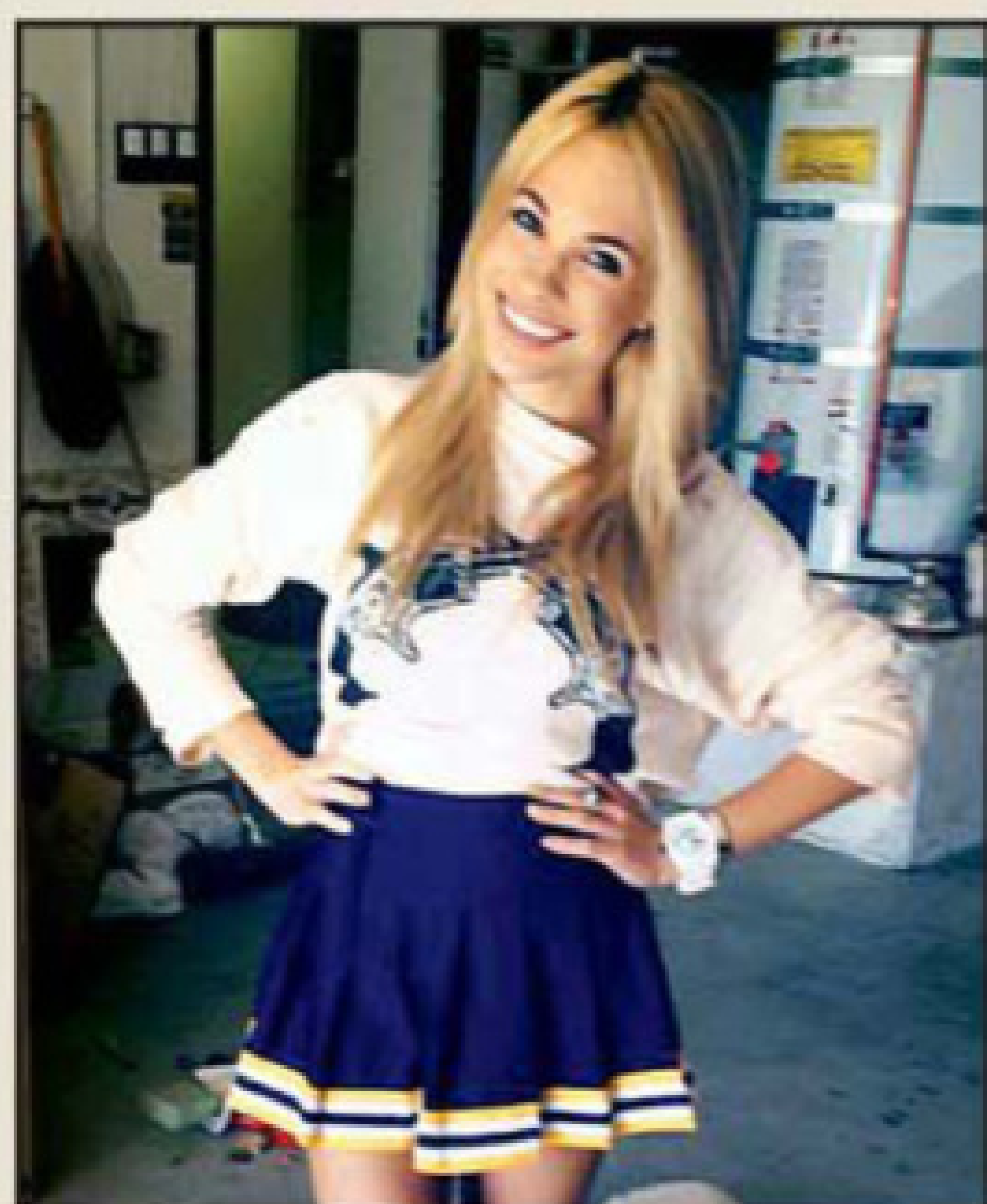
AMBITIONS: My primary goal is to complete my communications degree and land my own talk show. I love talking to people!

TURN-ONS: A chivalrous man (please open my door for me) who can cook and grill has my heart forever!!

TURNOFFS: I can't stand lazy, condescending people whose heads are bigger than their hearts. Selfish lovers drive me up a wall - if you're going to take my pants off... COMMIT!!!

MY LITERARY LOVE: Paulo Coelho, the genius writer of The Alchemist who endlessly teaches a crystal-clear vision of the world. I want to eat his brain and gain his knowledge. ☺

BOOT-SCOOTIN' BOOGIE: Put me on a plane to my fave beach city, Cabo, slap some oil on me and I'm GOLDEN!!



Back in my cheer days!!



Little surfer girl.



My alpaca friend in Patagonia.

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Regular marriage and gay marriage are like bikini tops and bras. They're exactly the same thing, but only one is taboo in public.

What's the difference between a cocktail waitress who works in a strip club and an actual stripper?

About two weeks.

Girls are like roads: The more curves they have, the more dangerous they are.

I hear you're dating a little person," a man said to his brother.

"Oh yes," the brother replied. "I'm just nuts over her."



A woman walked into a drugstore and asked the pharmacist if the store carried extra-large condoms.

"Yes, we do," he said. "Would you like to buy some?"

"No," she replied. "But do you mind if I wait around until someone does?"

A guy called a law office and said, "I want to talk to my lawyer."

The receptionist replied, "I'm sorry, but he died last week."

The next day he phoned again and asked the same question. The receptionist replied, "I told you yesterday, he died last week."

The next day the guy called again and asked to speak to his lawyer. The receptionist was getting a little annoyed and said, "I keep telling you, your lawyer died last week. Why do you keep calling?"

The guy said, "Because I just love hearing your reply."

Pavlov was sitting in a bar when the phone rang. "Damn," he said, "I forgot to feed the dog."

I scared the crap out of my sister and her friends last night," a teenager told his friend. "I walked in on them at a slumber party masturbating."

"What did they say?" the friend asked.

He answered, "They all screamed at me to put my pants back on."

What is the difference between a dog and a fox?

Four beers.

A bank manager noticed one of his new clerks was terrible when it came to counting money and adding figures. "Where did you get your financial education?" he asked.

"Yale," replied the lad.

"Wow," the manager said, "glad to have you aboard, and what is your name again?"

The guy replied, "Yim Yohnson."

A young man excitedly told his mother he'd fallen in love and was going to get married. He said, "Just for fun, Ma, I'm going to bring over three women, and you can try to guess which one I want to marry."

His mother agreed, so the next day he brought three beautiful women to the house and sat them down for a chat. Afterward, he asked, "Which one am I going to marry?"

"I know it's the redhead," his mother immediately replied.

Stunned, the young man said, "That's amazing. How did you know?"

She answered, "Because I can't stand her."

Did you hear about the blind hooker?
You have to hand it to her.



Shirley Neiman

With a sheep under his arm, a man walked into his bedroom and stood in front of his wife. "This is the pig I have been having sex with," he said.

The wife looked at him and replied, "That's not a pig, it's a sheep."

He answered, "I wasn't talking to you."

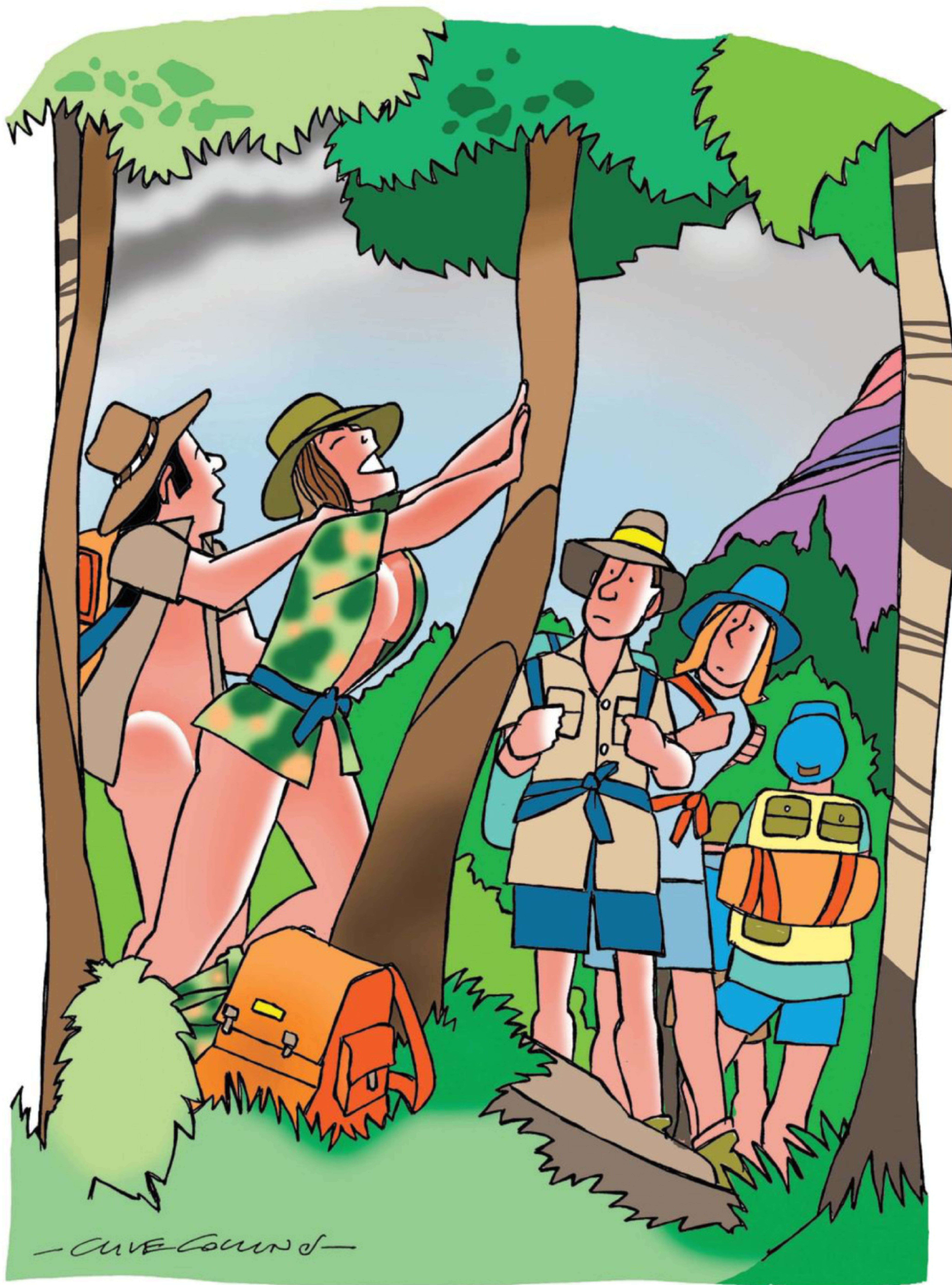
What do you call 13 guys watching the NBA Finals on TV?

The Los Angeles Lakers.

What's the ultimate rejection?

You're masturbating and your hand falls asleep.

Send your jokes to Playboy Party Jokes, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com. PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.



"No, no, go on without us, Dan. We'll only slow you down."





KATE MARLA

THE ACTRESS HOLLYWOOD LOVES TO
TYPECAST REVEALS HER NICER SIDE,
RELIVES GROWING UP IN AN NFL DYNASTY
AND DEFENDS ALL THOSE RACY SEX SCENES

BY STEPHEN REBELLO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KURT ISWARIENKO

Q1

PLAYBOY: Many know you from your “nice girl” roles in big movies such as *Brokeback Mountain* and *127 Hours*, but TV viewers have watched you unleash your inner bad girl as the icy, ruthlessly ambitious journalist on *House of Cards*, as a vengeful sexual supernatural stalker on *American Horror Story* and as a bisexual cheerleader on *Nip/Tuck*. And now in *Transcendence* you play a militant revolutionary opposite Johnny Depp. What is Hollywood trying to tell us about you?

MARA: There’s always a reason people get cast in certain roles, so I feel maybe there is something of that underneath. I take all that as a compliment. I don’t think of myself as icy, but I’m definitely ambitious. I do think of myself as strong and very driven. I’ve had to audition for most of the roles I’ve done, so I still have to go in and prove I can be driven. I’m also comfortable saying that I’m pretty vulnerable with people I trust.

Q2

PLAYBOY: You were raised in New York’s wealthy Westchester County with an older and a younger brother, as well as your also famous younger sister, actress Rooney Mara. Your father’s family founded and still owns the New York Giants, of which he’s an executive. Your mother’s family founded and still owns the Pittsburgh Steelers. With that background, should we imagine you growing up beautiful, spoiled, headstrong and, when you got old enough, breaking the hearts of Giants and Steelers team members you dated?

MARA: Thank God no, because doing that would not have gone down well. I respected my dad way too much to ever even have that sort of temptation. The Giants are my family, and I’ll always look at the team that way. Even going to a football game in sneakers and jeans, getting drunk with friends—that was so not the experience I ever had. We’d go into the box and sit with my grandma, dressed as nicely as if we were going to church. It was very much a place of business.



“ I TRIED TO GET KEVIN SPACEY
TO LAUGH BY WEARING PASTIES
WITH HIS FACE ON THEM. ”

Q3

PLAYBOY: At several Giants games you've sung "The Star-Spangled Banner," and you also sang very well in the 2010 indie movie *Happythankyoumoreplease*. Should other singing actresses such as Anne Hathaway and Amanda Seyfried lose sleep?

MARA: My first dreams of acting were about being in musical theater on Broadway. My sister and I would watch all those classic black-and-white movie musicals. That's what excited me and what I wanted to do. As kids, my sister and I were even in a local production of *The Wizard of Oz* together, and neither of us played Dorothy. I guess we've shown *them*.

Q4

PLAYBOY: How did you start singing at those Giants games?

MARA: The first time was at the age of 14 when my uncle or my dad asked me if I felt like singing it. I was so naive and inexperienced that I thought, I'm just singing in front of my family and all these drunk people who don't care who's singing. As I got older and

more successful in the acting world, I became harder on myself. I haven't done it for at least four years now, and the thought of doing it is definitely scarier now than it used to be.

Q5

PLAYBOY: Does that mean you've given up wanting to sing on-screen too?

MARA: My dream role would be to play Gypsy Rose Lee in a movie of *Gypsy*. I was 14 or 15 when they were bringing back *The Sound of Music* to Broadway and I got five callbacks. They had picked one kid for each of the roles, and though I'm a very small person—five feet three inches—they were afraid I'd grow taller than the girl they'd cast as the oldest daughter. I swore to them, "No, I'm not going to grow any taller," and I haven't. But when I didn't get that job, I thought I would die from the rejection.

Q6

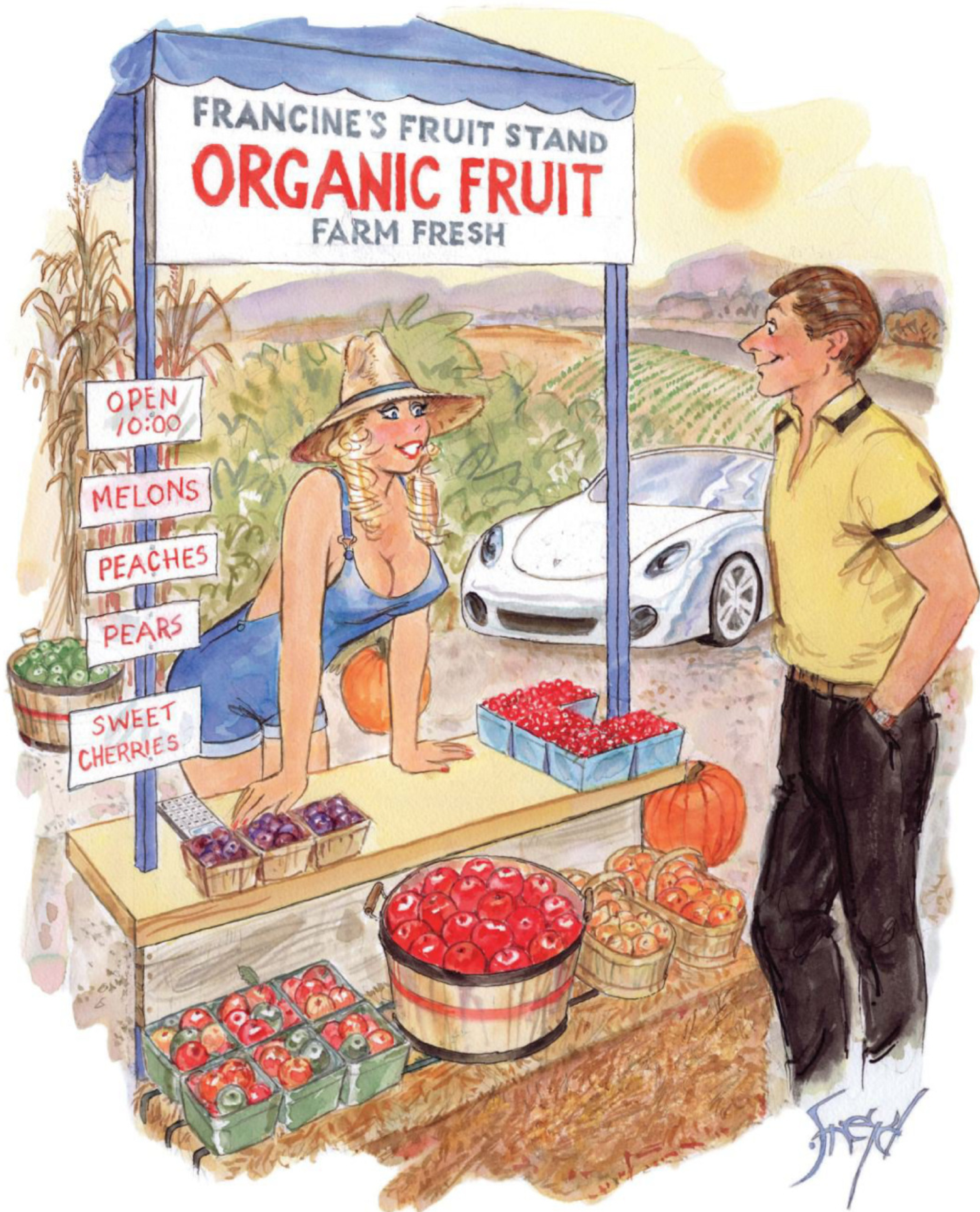
PLAYBOY: When you were growing up, were your friends and would-be friends always hitting you up for Giants and Steelers tickets?

MARA: Maybe it's where I grew up, in a beautiful town, but I wasn't surrounded by people who ever tried to get things from me. I had very few friends, and I come from a huge, really close family. The need to have a big group of friends has never been a part of me. I love the Giants and Steelers so much that I sort of have an agreement on the set that if either team is in the Super Bowl, I have to be off the next day.

Q7

PLAYBOY: Did your lack of friends when you were young mean you were an introvert?

MARA: Like a lot of actors, I was painfully shy. School was terrifying to me, and I don't even know why. My mom was kind of shocked that acting was my chosen profession, given the fact that I could barely look people in the eye. But she was amazing, putting my sister and me into all these community theater shows and taking us to auditions. Having to be friendly and open to new people helped get me out of my shell. *(continued on page 118)*



"Yes, everything you see here is all natural—and the fruit is too."

FLIGHT PLAN



- *Playboy's* -
ESSENTIAL GUIDE
TO TRAVELING
LIKE A MAN
IN 2014

Sure, you could jet off to the world's most famous monuments and take the exact same selfie every other tourist posts on Instagram. Or you could embrace all the *not* been there, *not* done that our world has to offer. Here are trek-worthy drinks, cool gear, solid advice and the most thrilling destinations to get you globe-trotting in style.

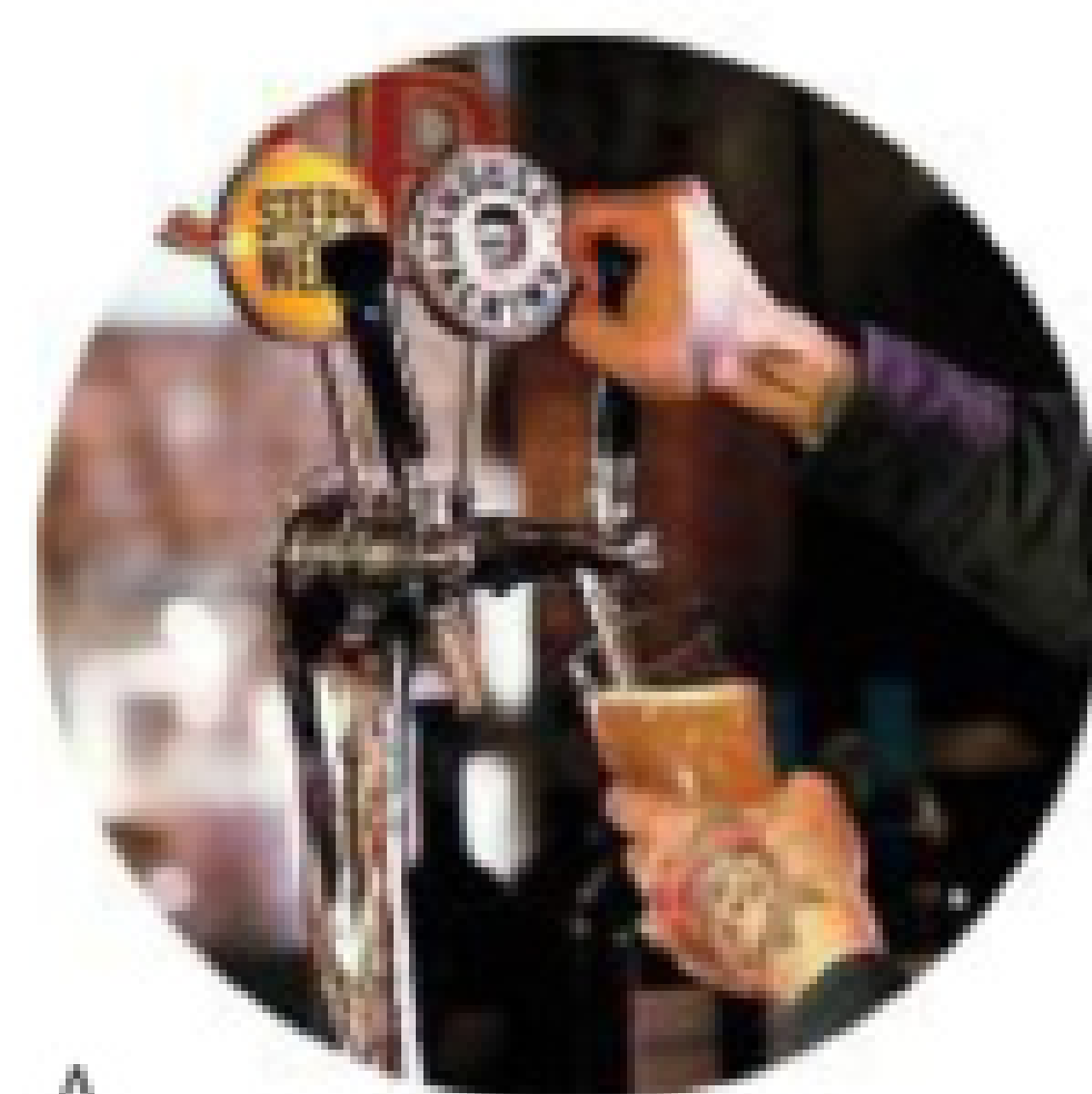


Andrew B. Myers

WAYS TO TRAVEL IN 2014

No. 1 GO HIGH-LOW IN CAPE TOWN

→ After competing against European rivals Bilbao and Dublin, the South African city of Cape Town emerged as the World Design Capital for 2014. Along with shiny accolades there will be site installations, gallery happenings and public works of art. But high-minded



A

design has been creeping into low-culture hangouts too: Capetonian biker shop Los Muertos Motorcycles (B) triples as an aesthetically pleasing coffeehouse and film production studio ("Love kills, speed thrills"); the House of Machines (A, C) serves all your masculine needs—grooming, dressing, accessorizing, drinking—with its lifestyle shop, café and top-shelf bar (operating Thursday and Friday nights). Concept



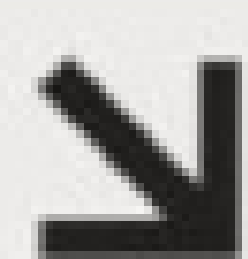
B

shop Latitude 33 combines Aussie surf gear, art and upscale bistro food under one civilized, well-designed roof, welcoming riders of bone shakers, crotch rockets, gnarly waves and modernist trends alike.



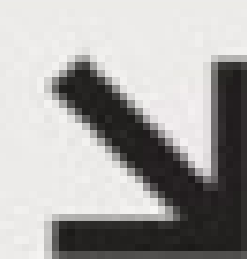
C

HOW NOT TO SEEM JET-LAGGED... OR HUNGOVER



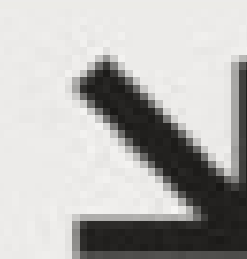
WINGMAN WIPES

- After getting off the red-eye, deploy these wipes to remove that flyer's glaze without having to hit the shower. \$4, groominglounge.com



CLINIQUE EYE GEL

- A built-in roller ball and cooling gel combine to take the puff out of the most exhausted eyes. \$28, neimanmarcus.com



SUPERSMILE QUIKEE

- Don't want to look and smell like last night's vino? This breath freshener and tooth whitener will do the trick. \$18, supersmile.com



BIKE THIS WAY

- There's no faster way to get up close and personal with a city, learn its rhythms and look like a local than on a bicycle. The limited-edition Raeburn jacket from super-cool apparel brand Rapha Cycle Club will take the bite out of the wind whether you're cranking through Paris, Brooklyn or Copenhagen on a rented bike. The slim tailoring and basic black also make this the perfect jacket for transitioning from airplane to afterparty.

Rapha & Raeburn quilted jacket, \$600, rapha.cc

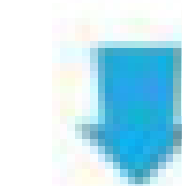
THE EXPERTS



JERALYN GERBA & PAVIA ROSATI

To bring you the five hottest emerging destinations around the world, we turned to the best-traveled ladies we know: the lovely co-founders of tastemaking travel site Fathom (fathomaway.com).

ANDREW ZIMMERN'S RULES FOR SMALL-TIME FOOD SMUGGLERS



"When a goat farmer in Sardinia hands me a goat's leg cured like prosciutto, a Chinese grandmother gives me dry-cured sausage to continue aging in my basement or I get a pound of a raw-milk cheese from the most famous cheese shop in Paris, what choice do I have but to try to bring those things home?"

1. BEST WAY TO GET IT THROUGH

- Plastic. Take your goods to a deli and give the guy five bucks to Cryovac it. Works like a charm.

2. BIGGEST SMUGGLING MYTH

- Wrapping stinky foods in dirty clothes. The clothes will only spread the scent of the food. And if officials do open your bag, they're going to find everything inside. It's a game of roulette.

3. MOST MEMORABLE CONFISCATION

- The minister of tourism for Vietnam presented me with three bottles of rare aged fish sauce, which a Vietnamese immigration officer promptly smashed against a wall for show.

4. STRONGEST WARNING

- Never smuggle foods into other countries where lying to a government official could lead to a lot worse consequences than having your salami confiscated.

5. BEST STRATEGY WHEN FACED WITH A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL

- Smile and lie.

6. STRANGEST THING I'VE EVER SMUGGLED

- A big piece of dried bonito from Okinawa. It's just a different quality from anything you can get in an American market.

7. RULE OF THUMB

- Never smuggle anything you'd mind having taken from you.

8. WHAT I DON'T SMUGGLE

- Endangered species and fresh fruits and vegetables, which could cause real harm to local agriculture.

Andrew Zimmern is the host of Bizarre Foods on the Travel Channel.

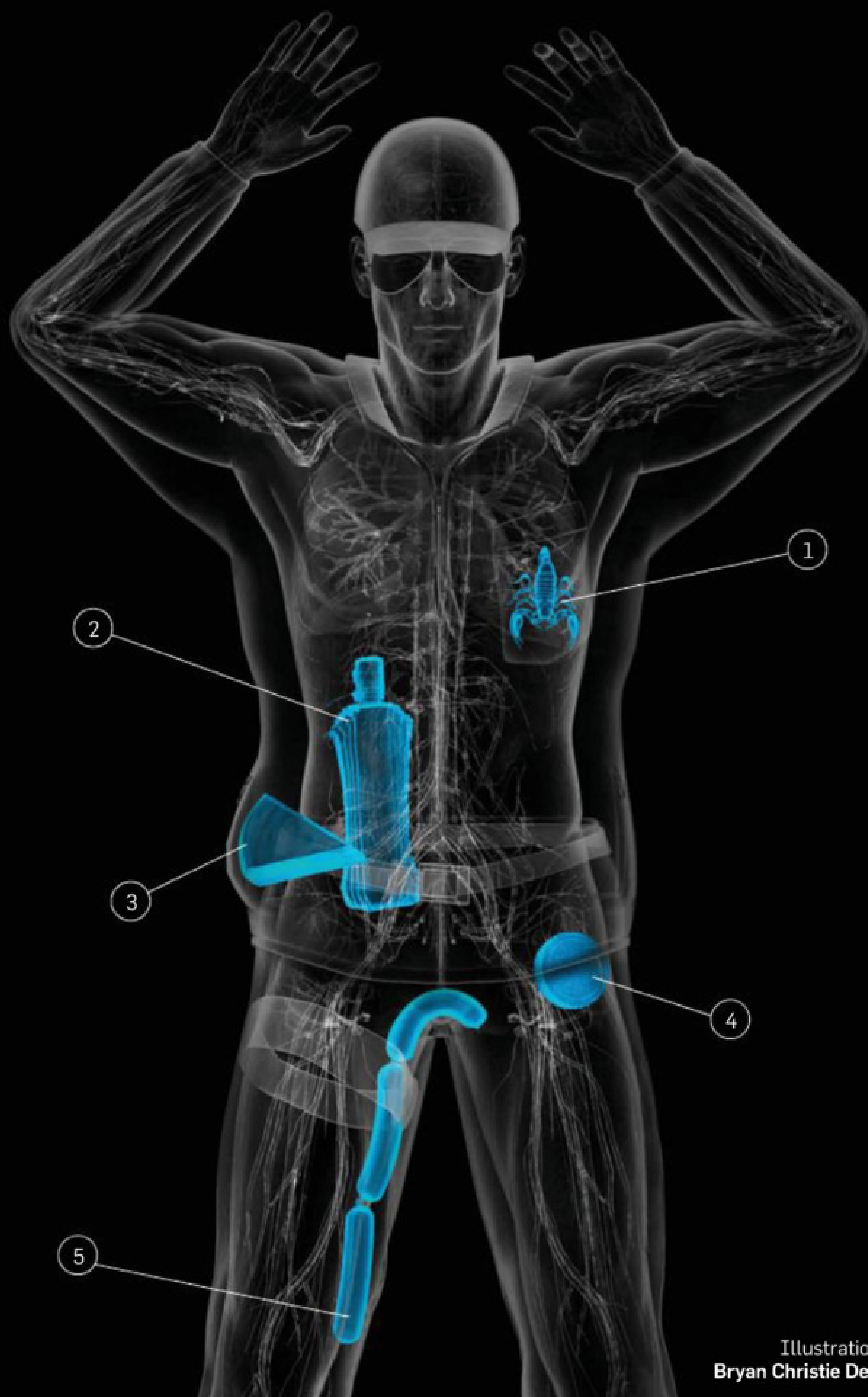
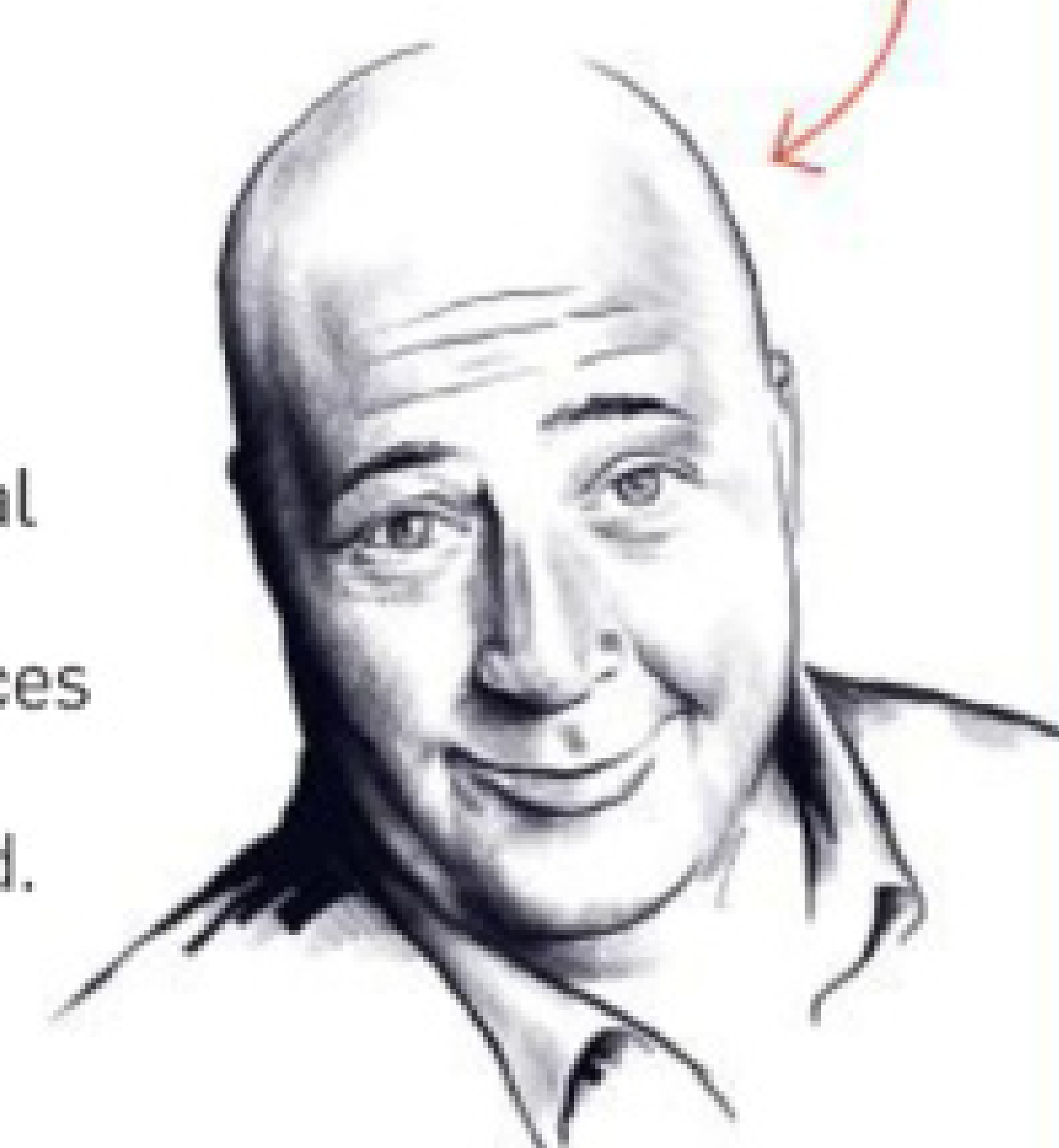


Illustration by
Bryan Christie Design

TOP 5 SMUGGLE-WORTHY FOODS

Scorpion (1) For daring travelers who develop a hankering for deep-fried scorpion in Singapore, note that they're a no-go souvenir under the "no meat" law. Hang it from a necklace and maybe Customs won't notice. Absinthe (2) Some European brands of the acid-green, high-octane spirit still contain thujone, a supposedly hallucinogenic chemical that's banned in the U.S. Even if your bottle is thujone free, hallucinogenic images on the label could get it confiscated. Cheese (3) Raw (unpasteurized) milk

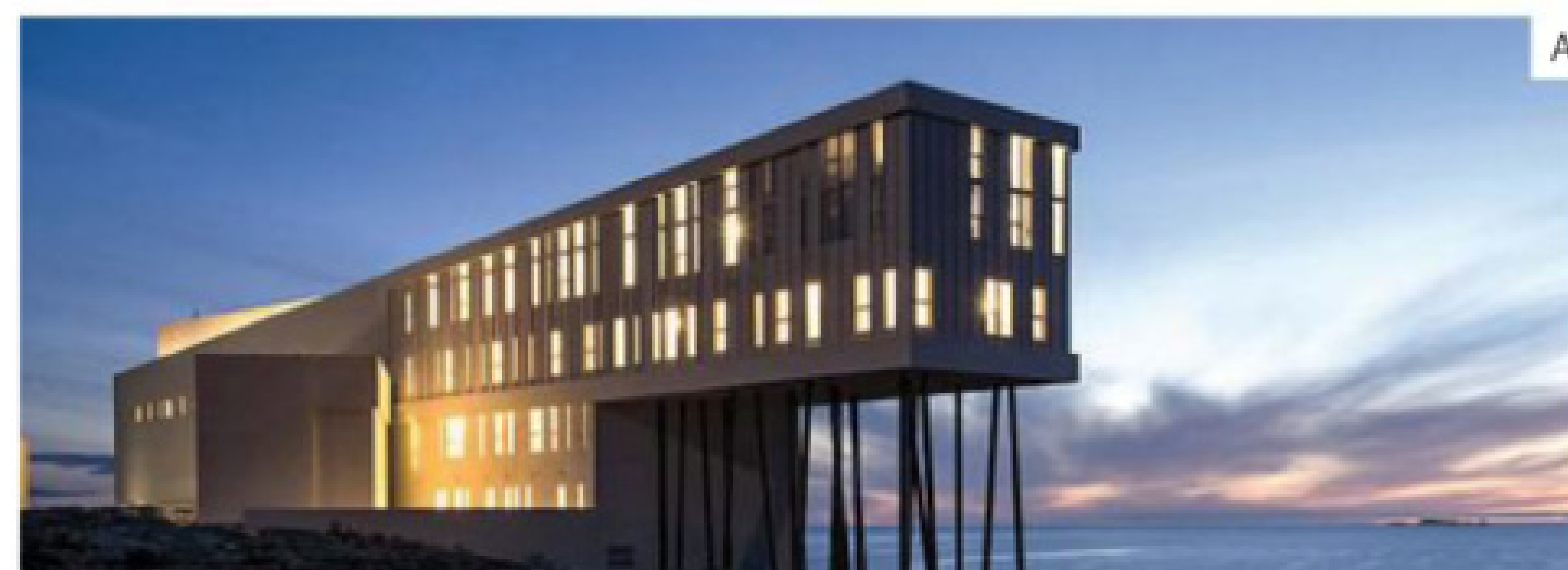
cheeses aged under 60 days (a.k.a., the smelly, runny good stuff) are off limits. Freeze the cheese before you travel to minimize the funk. Caviar (4) Caviar from wild sturgeon is protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. There are good alternatives, but for caviar purists—or those who just want what they can't have—there is no substitute. Meat (5) That baton of Tuscan wild-boar salami or the pistachio-flecked mortadella you bonded with in Bologna is, no matter what the zealous vendor may claim, banned. You cannot bring meat—any meat, fresh or cured—into this country. Which isn't to say you can't try.—Carolynn Carreño

No. 2 GO NATIVE ON FOGO

→ On a remote, rugged archipelago on the eastern edge of the North American continent stands the hypermodern, hyper-hard-to-reach Fogo Island Inn (A), an architectural mar-

vel of glass walls, saltbox shapes, solar panels and steel stilts that rise from the windswept surroundings (like craggy moors and rogue arctic ice floes). This is what luxury

survivalist mode looks like: Every textile and piece of furniture in the 29 minimalist, ocean-view rooms is made locally by hand; the kitchen staff scours the island for kelp,



A

mushrooms, spruce and seafood to serve you modern Newfoundland on a plate. It's the kind of place where you'll meet boat builders at the bar, artists-in-residence at the rooftop sauna and cari-

bou just beyond the bonfire. Of course, you may prefer to watch the fog roll in from the comfort of your natural-fiber bed in front of your personal wood-burning stove. There's no FOMO on Fogo.

FIRST-CLASS CASE

↓
• Things can get competitive at the baggage carousel, where even the fanciest ballistic-nylon suitcases all start to blur together. The aluminum and calfskin-leather Orion suitcase from Hermès costs as much as a first-class ticket to Dubai but is by far the most dashing and durable carry-on we've ever seen.



Hermès Orion suitcase, \$12,100



A

No. 3 GO COLONIAL IN THE CASCO

→ Once graffitied and gang-laden, Panama City's 350-year-old colonial neighborhood of Casco Viejo is making a comeback. Crumbling pastel facades and dilapidated

buildings are interspersed with gourmet coffee shops and landscaped gardens. Savvy travelers stay at boutique properties such as the newly opened American Trade Hotel (A, B), a restored landmark building from the guys behind the Ace Hotel empire. Atelier Ace, along with Commune Design and Panama City-based Conservatorio, set out to reinvigorate not

just buildings but people, reforming gang members and involving local artisans in every aspect of the restoration. Luxe details such as Frette sheets and Aesop bath products mix with handmade Panamanian furnishings and timber reclaimed through underwater logging in the Panama Canal. A 50-seat nightclub is run by Panamanian jazz pianist Danilo Perez.



B

USEFUL PHRASES

Phrase books are handy when you're traveling abroad, but what happens when you're in a jam and need to get specific? Here are a few useful phrases for traveling to 2014's hottest spots.
—Mickey Rapkin

DILEMMA	TRY THIS	TRANSLATION
On a train in Ecuador • While admiring snowcapped mountains from the newly rehabbed luxury train Tren Crucero, you spot a better local view—of a seriously beautiful female passenger.	<i>"La mejor cura para la enfermedad de movimiento es un cóctel rígido. ¿Nos vemos en el bar?"</i>	"The best cure for motion sickness is a stiff cocktail. Meet you in the bar car?"
At a nudist colony in Germany • Sylt is a nudist's—sorry, naturist's—paradise. What's the etiquette when dropping trou in this northern European St.-Tropez?	<i>"Entschuldigung, ich wollte dich nicht anstarren, ich wurde nur von der Sonne geblendet."</i>	"My apologies. I wasn't staring at you; the sun was in my eyes."
At a bar in Tokyo • Feeling lonely in Roppongi, you strike up a conversation with a sexy lady in a bar. Is she really into you, or does she put the <i>ho</i> in hostess?	<i>"Sharudone no kono garasu wa-sha yori mo sukunai hiyo wa kakaru no?"</i>	"Does this glass of chardonnay cost less than a car?"

No. 4 GO PALEO ON THE PAMPAS



A

→ Feed your carnivorous cravings at Playa Vik (A), an avant-garde retreat in José Ignacio, South America's must-visit bohemian beach village. Evenings

are spent on the barbecue terrace, learning how to cook beef like the gauchos; days are meant for watching bronzed bodies soak in the hot Uruguayan sun. The hotel's dramatic black-stone pool (B) hovers 32 feet over Playa Mansa and lights up at night with a fiber-optic celestial map of the Southern sky. Architecture junkies won't be

disappointed with Sculpture, the double curved titanium and glass building designed by architect Carlos Ott, or the six smaller surrounding casas decked out with the owner's insane art collection: a mix of prominent international and South American artists including Anselm Kiefer, Pablo Atchugarry and Montserrat Soto.



B

No. 5 GO ARTSY IN CHICAGO



A

→ Art takes action on Chicago's South Side, where enterprising artist and instigator Theaster Gates continually blurs the line between artwork and neighborhood project, working as real estate developer, civic hero, wheeler-dealer and cultural archivist. Young creatives and longtime locals hang around his Dorchester Projects (A), on the 6900 block of Dorchester Avenue, where Gates acquired several vacant and abandoned properties for adaptive reuse. One building is now an art and architecture library stocked with books he bought from a closing city bookstore. Another,

Black Cinema House, is home to a vintage-slide archive donated by the University of Chicago and a serious vinyl collection from Dr. Wax, the defunct record store. His latest project, Arts Incubator, takes shape in a 1920s corner building that is all things at once: exhibition space, concert venue, artist residency and main line for tapping into the local pulse.

THE EXPERT

CHARLES JOLY

When Charles Joly isn't creating avant-garde cocktails at the Aviary in Chicago, he's doing bibulous research on the road. He brings us his six favorite sips worth a trip.



SIX DRINKS WORTH TRAVELING FOR



BATANGA

La Capilla, Tequila, Mexico

• Forty miles outside Guadalajara, at the base of an extinct volcano, sits the town of Tequila. If you plan to stay for the long haul, set down your glass of straight booze and head to La Capilla to belly up with 80-something-year-old Don Javier. His signature batanga is as legendary as his smile. The generous pour of blanco tequila, lime juice and Coke stirred together with an old knife and served in a salt-rimmed glass will keep you on track.



SAZERAC

French 75 Bar, New Orleans

• Just steps off the beautiful stink that is Bourbon Street rests the historic French 75 Bar. Its crack team, led by bon vivant Chris Hannah, will quickly make you forget the ubiquitous frozen cocktail machines that litter the strip. The official cocktail of the city of New Orleans, this combo of rye whiskey, absinthe, bitters and sugar is a whiskey drinker's dream. Just don't ask them to drop the lemon peel in (it's all about the oils).



SACHACOO

Astrid y Gastón, Lima

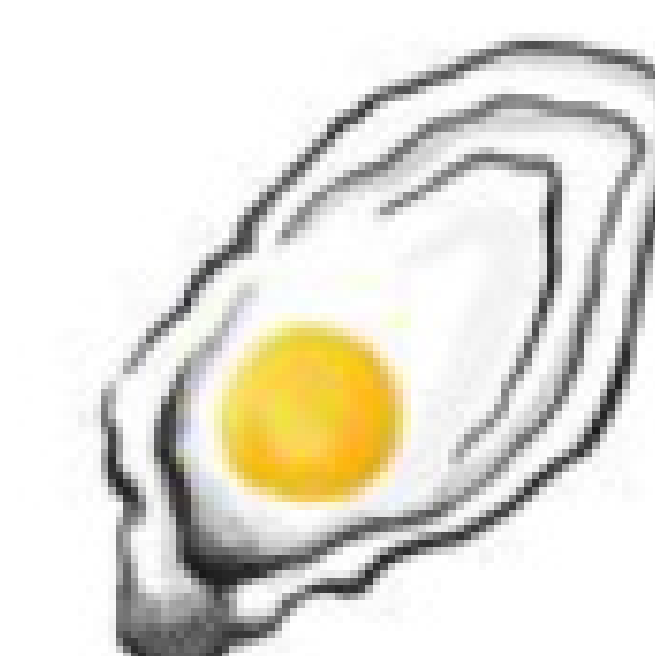
• Gastronomy may be the big draw in Latin America's culinary capital, but I'm here to tell you to come thirsty as well. With access to some of the most exotic ingredients from the Amazon, mixologist Aaron Diaz will wow you with his signature sachacool cocktail. A combination of native pisco, Tahiti lime, peppercorns and *sacha culantro* (similar in taste to cilantro) will take you on a Peruvian flavor trek.



'TI PUNCH

Habitation Clément, Martinique

• "*Chacun prépare sa propre mort*" or "Each prepares his own death." Intrigued? Time to dust off the French-English dictionary and head to the paradise that is Martinique. After strolling the gardens of Habitation Clément, cool off with the island's most famous cocktail. Traditionally, guests are given an entire bottle of *rhum agricole* (local rum made from fresh cane), sugar and slices of lime to mix their own 'ti punch and take fate into their own hands.



PRAIRIE OYSTER

69 Colebrooke Row, London

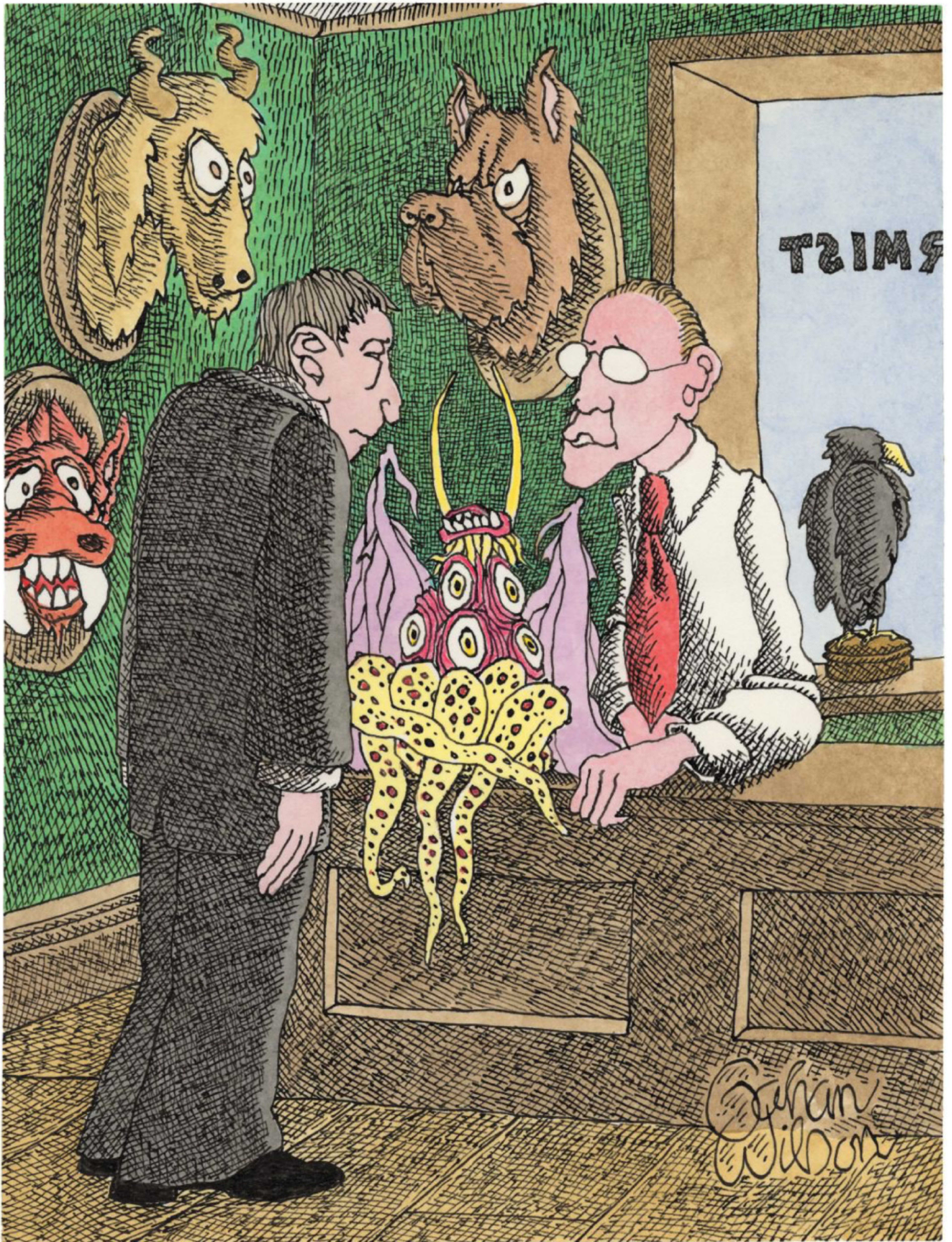
• Tucked away in London's Angel neighborhood, 69 Colebrooke Row has for years served some of the most forward-thinking libations across the pond. This one-slip cocktail combines a tomato juice "yolk," horseradish vodka and an oyster leaf. The result is a deconstructed bloody mary. An infusion here, a little spherification there and voilà, a spicy, savory explosion that will have your taste buds doing backflips.



HAND-CARVED ICE DIAMOND

Bar High Five, Tokyo

• I'd sooner drink a spirit neat than pour it over lousy ice. This isn't a problem at world-acclaimed Bar High Five. Watch in awe as owner and master bartender Hidetsugu Ueno wields a razor-sharp knife to carve the perfect diamond, all while being the most gracious of hosts. The Ichiro or Yamazaki whiskey you choose will be honored to rest on this masterpiece.



"Are you sure you want this thing stuffed and hanging on your wall?"



Times
LATEXTRA

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JOINS
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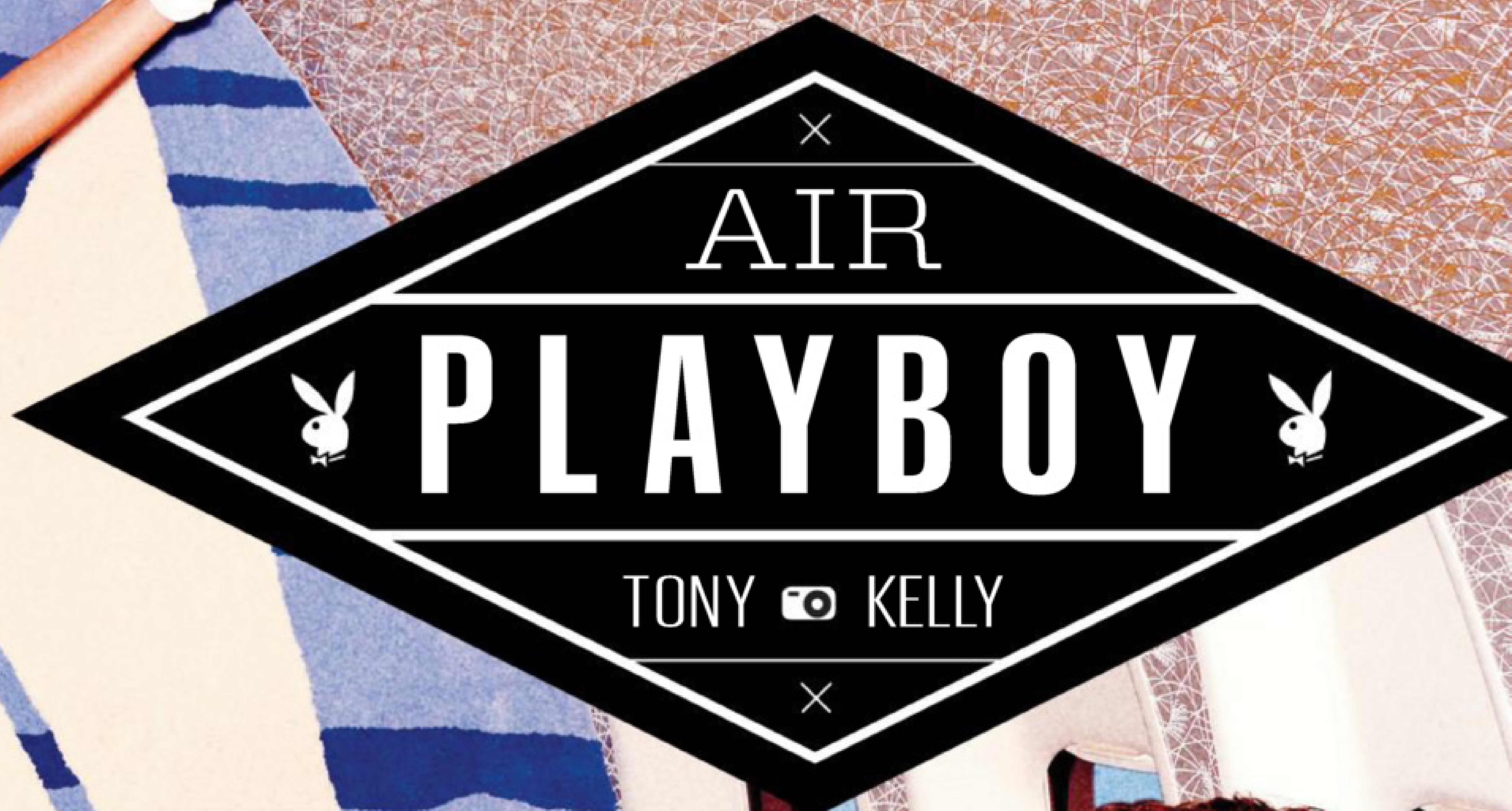
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Declare emergency to push state and Shell Oil to speed up



DANGER

747
SAFETY



TAKE A TRIP BACK TO THE GOLDEN AGE OF
AIR TRAVEL. WITH A FLIGHT CREW OF FOUR BEAUTIFUL
PLAYMATES, YOU'RE IN EXCELLENT HANDS.















EXTREME

(continued from page 71)

Stuff That Can Kill You.

But that's the point.

That's what hypes the adrenaline.

That's why they do it.

Their adrenaline *screeches*. The limestone walls flash past them, the river lunges up. One mistake—

The wrong tilt of an arm.

The wrong angle of a spine.

An errant gust of wind—

Can kill them.

•

Paige and Kurt are not interested in dying.

They're interested in *living*.

At the highest possible level.

The max.

So at the count of 10 they let go of each other's hands and pull the ripcords. (Now there's a metaphor for a successful relationship.) They want a little distance from each other when the parachutes deploy, lest they get tangled up and fall to their deaths in a twisted knot. (Now there's a metaphor for a successful relationship.)

There are sounds to like and sounds to love.

Sounds to like—

The cry of a red-tailed hawk.

The wail of a Sonny Stitt sax riff.

The crackle of a fire on a cold night.

Sound to love—

The pop of a parachute opening.

Better, in this case, the sound of *two* parachutes opening. (The sound of *one* parachute opening would be very depressing for both parties involved. But let's be stone honest—*much* more depressing for the party in closer proximity to the nonsound.)

They aren't big parachutes. They don't have to be; they just have to be big *enough* to slow them down before they hit the water, because water at 80 per isn't that much different from rock (as any suicidal bridge jumper knows or should know). The chutes jerk Kurt and Paige up and then float them down to the river where Latchkey and Lev—fresh from their own jumps—wait in a Zodiac to haul them out.

Kurt—bigger, heavier—hits first. Reaches up and detaches the chute before it can smother him under the water. Then he comes up and sees Paige in the water just upstream, clear of her parachute and swimming.

"Fun!" she yells.

He smiles and nods and they swim toward the boat.

Yeah, fun. A thousand-foot tandem free fall through a narrow canyon into a river.

Extreme.

Except—

It was just a warm-up. The real adrenaline rush goes off tomorrow.

•

Adrenaline (n.): a hormone secreted by the adrenal gland in response to stress.

The problem with adrenaline is the same as with any drug. Tolerance.

That is, it takes more and more of it to get you off.

Until you die from it.

"But," Kurt says, "you die high."

Kurt, Paige, Latchkey and Lev sit at the bar at the Quality Inn & Suites in Cañon City, Colorado, the nearest town to the Royal Gorge Bridge. The jump is two hours behind them and they're knocking back a few celebratory beers to sand the adrenaline edge a little bit.

Latchkey got his name because, come on, he was a latchkey kid who used the PAT (parental absence time) to jump off the garage roof, the house roof and the neighbors' roofs when he was not performing physics-defying stunts on his skateboard that put him on a first-name basis with most of the staff at the Glenwood Springs emergency room. ("Mrs. Latchkey? We have your son here....")

Latchkey—there is a remote memory that his given name is Kevin—has broad shoulders, shaggy brown hair and a beard. He comes off as sort of a clown, but don't let it fool you. Bozo don't BASE jump off the Royal Gorge Bridge (and a cat as cool as Kurt isn't going to trust a clown to fish him out of the water).

Latchkey can flat-out fly.

He's a birdman.

In fact, Latchkey has often expressed his belief that he actually *is* a bird—a Fijian peregrine falcon to be precise. He says it's a reincarnation thing, but Paige thinks it's more of a peyote thing. She came across him sitting outside the motel the morning of the Western States Ultramarathon, dutifully scraping the strychnine out of the peyote buds, but she sort of doubts he got it all.

Now beer foam bubbles on his mustache as he crushes another pint and listens to Kurt hold forth on the subject of adrenaline.

Adrenaline, Kurt explains, is a chemical released by cortisol that gives you the physical and mental energy to do what you have to do.

"Neanderthal days," Kurt says. "Bonk and Gronk—"

"Bonk and Gronk?" Paige asks, laughing.

"Bonk and Gronk," Kurt insists, "go out after the mastodon. Mastodon gets wind of them and charges. *Bang*—the body releases adrenaline that gives Bonk and Gronk the wherewithal to run. Fast. It's Darwinian."

"I don't think," Paige says, "adrenaline was designed to give you the biochemical wherewithal to jump off bridges. That's *counter-Darwinian*."

Every chemical in your brain and body screams at you not to jump off a bridge, a cliff or the top of a building, or an antenna at the top of a building—all of which these four people have done. Darwin would indicate that people who do such things have less chance of reproducing and would therefore be selected out of the population.

A professor of biophysics, Paige knows about these things.

"It's an *abuse* of adrenaline," Lev adds.

Lev means lion and Paige says it's an aptonym, because there *is* something leonine about Lev. Not that the young Russian has a mane—in fact his head is

shaved—but he has the lean, killer look of a cougar, a.k.a. (mountain) lion. It's the eyes. Slate gray.

You don't want to mess with Lev. Don't want to jam him on the trail, cross him on a ski run, take his line on a cliff face or a big wave.

He'll give you that headstone look.

Then run you down.

Lev is a world-class speed climber. A free-soloist without belays or protection, and not on artificial walls in tony suburban gyms where the thwack of you falling onto a thick mat makes someone spray his cappuccino foam. No, on mountains, real mountains, where the thwack of you falling makes someone puke his guts out—and he holds the current solo record on Half Dome.

He and Latchkey jumped the bridge together—albeit not holding hands—swam to the Zodiac and then crewed for Kurt and Paige.

If you're looking down a thousand-foot drop, those are two people you want to see waiting for you. You really do, because they are ultracompetent, maximum frosty, and they are never going to give up until they pull you out of whatever shit you got yourself into.

An example—

Kurt got sideways at Mavericks one time. First wave of a set, so he's in the impact zone with three more waves scheduled like German trains to come down on his head—and Lev and Latchkey roar in on the Z between waves. The next wave could crush them—flip the Z over and roll it like a toy. But they come in anyway—Lev driving and Latch behind him—and Latch reaches down and grabs Kurt on the first try (there isn't going to be a second try), pulls him onto the sled and they bust out of there with the next wave looming over them like a pissed-off giant cheated of its fee-fi-fo-fum.

The sound that Kurt remembers from that wasn't the wave going off like a hissing fuse, but Latchkey giggling like a 12-year-old girl.

What he also remembers is that Latchkey and Lev didn't hesitate.

Neither would he.

Now Kurt lifts his Dos Equis and says, "Here's to adrenaline abusers."

"Adrenaline *addicts*," Paige corrects.

As usual, she's right.

Forget about nicotine, caffeine, alcohol, cocaine and heroin. You get hooked on adrenaline, game over. You will chase *that* dime until you just can't run anymore.

"A drug you can't buy," Lev says, "but can only earn."

They clink their bottles in a toast to that.

"Everyone," Kurt sums up, "has the biochemistry to survive. Few have the biochemistry to *live*."

•

Dig the scene at the bar. Extreme athletes, photographers, video artists, support people (pilots, gear riggers, EMTs), groupies and sponsors quaff designer beers and check out the clips from the day's activities on iPads. They talk about who made it onto YouTube, how many views, who's



"No, silly. When I said I wanted a sex-change operation, I didn't mean I wanted to become a man. I already am a man."

trending, who got that great shot, that clip that's going to go viral, make a household name, grace the cover of a mag.

Adrenaline porn, Paige calls it.

The room is filled with literally beautiful people. Young, healthy and decked out in North Face, Patagonia and Nike, these are people who run, who bike, who ski, who climb, who jump, who fly. Negative body-fat percentages, serene resting heart rates, natural tans. Chemicals so thick you could scoop them out of the air with a spoon—adrenal, cortisol, testosterone.

A lot of testosterone, hence the groupies.

These aren't rock (and roll) groupies—or baseball, basketball, football semipro—these are mostly beautiful, accomplished, intelligent women who are usually athletes in their own right. They just like to go to bed with guys who jump off bridges.

Danger is an aphrodisiac.

Kurt could hook up 58 times a night if he wanted to.

He's drop-dead (okay—unfortunate) good-looking. Broad shoulders, V-shaped frame, legs designed to run down those mastodons. Killer handsome face. Deep brown eyes, thick brown hair cut short now.

And he's an extreme sports superstar—a runner, skier, surfer, climber and flier whose rugged face is all over the net and the mags.

The A-Male, the current king.

But he's already hooked up.

With Paige.

Talk about beautiful, accomplished, intelligent women.

Tall, short sandy hair (but don't call it a "Paige Cut," like one of the mags did; just don't do it), all legs, abs and taut muscle. A face that would be described as more

handsome than pretty. Mensa-level IQ, youngest full prof ever at Colorado State, owns the women's records at Leadville and Western States. Speed-climbed the Nose at El Cap and then BASE jumped down.

An extreme sports celebrity, Paige could hook up too, with any of the guys and more than a few of the women, if her gate swung both ways, which it doesn't. In any case, she doesn't want to.

She has Kurt.

Latchkey and Lev, different story. Even now they've started to check out the potential candidates. More Darwin.

The fit mate with the fit.

Although it's an open secret that Latchkey has, and has had, an unrequited crush on Paige that would pancake an elephant.

Paige is a little discomfited by it but otherwise doesn't mind, although she does wish Latchkey would "find somebody," and for more than one night.

Kurt doesn't mind either. He's an emotional libertarian.

Strike that—

He's an Emotional Libertarian.

He doesn't believe anyone has the right to tell anyone else whom, or what, he or she should love.

•

Gatherings like this happen all over the world. In North Shore, Oahu when the big waves go off, in Chamonix for the Mont Blanc Ultramarathon, here in Cañon City for the Speed Thrills Games at Royal Gorge.

Anywhere anyone is shredding the freak-ing envelope.

A photographer comes up to Kurt and Paige at the bar.

"Show you guys something?"

They know him. Brian Bentner, a freelancer who shoots for *Outside*, *Men's Journal*, *SI*. He holds up his Nikon and shows them the digital screen. Taken from the bridge, it shows Kurt and Paige, hand-in-hand, spread out in full flight, the gorge and the river beneath them.

"Beautiful," Paige says.

"It'll be on *Outside's* website in the morning," Brian says. "But I just tweeted it."

Brian has 100,000 followers.

"You going to shoot tomorrow?" Kurt asks.

"I'm thinking," Brian answers, "of harnessing off the bridge and getting a shot as you come past. Would I be in the way?"

"Hopefully not," Paige says.

Brian laughs. "*Domani*."

He walks away.

"Nice of him to ask," Paige says.

"Brian's cool," Kurt says. "We should go talk with Jay."

They get off their stools and walk over to a booth where Jay Michaels sits tapping into his laptop. Sandy Burrows sits across the table. Sandy's with a hot young ad firm out of Palo Alto.

Jay is his client.

His outdoor clothing line sponsors Kurt for Speed Thrills and other events. Jay is 41, looks 33 and is a multimillionaire. He moves over so Kurt and Paige can sit down and points to the screen. "Sandy was showing me your footage from today."

Kurt and Paige wore GoPro cameras



"Before you ask me what sort of day I've had, lock the doors, turn off the lights and keep well away from the windows...."

on their helmets to record the flight from their POVs.

"Good?" Kurt asks.

"Tasty."

They'll put it up with an ad banner for Jay's company and it will get half a million hits.

"What are your thoughts about tomorrow?" Sandy asks.

"I'm thinking we go," Kurt says.

Jay shakes his head.

"What?" Paige asks.

"The forecast calls for gusting winds out of the west." He punches up a weather site. Kurt and Paige lean over and look. "I think we should shut it down."

Because it's already crazy.

To wingsuit out of a plane at 12,000 feet, hit a speed of a buck 20, "slow" to 90 and then fly *under* the bridge. *Close* under the bridge. Like, at arm's length, close enough to reach up and grab little plastic red banners attached to the bottom beam on your way through.

Cuh-*raaazy*.

The slightest miscalculation, the tiniest mis-execution and you smash into a steel girder at 90 per. Not strapped in a car. Or in a plane. Just you in a plastic suit. Will make a great video if it works. (And a better one if it doesn't, is the ugly truth.)

Now you throw gusting winds into the equation and you have something that's truly out of your control. If a gust occurs at, say, 10,000 feet, okay, maybe you have time to deal with it, but if it hits when you're near the bridge?

Random.

Totally random.

"We already announced it," Kurt says.

"Who cares?" Jay says.

Kurt shrugs.

"Don't think about letting me down," Jay says. "I'm not that guy. I'm not that *ghoul*."

Kurt chuckles and looks at Sandy.

"I want great video," he says. "I don't want snuff video."

"Let's see what tomorrow brings," Kurt says.

It's the West—weather changes on a whim. Truth is that they'll probably make the decision in the plane.

No sense worrying about it now.

Life is short.

Q: How many people who previously attempted to fly under the bridge were killed?

A: Both of them.

Postcoital comedown.

Kurt and Paige, up in their room.

"Tomorrow," Kurt says.

"Yes?"

"I don't think we should do it."

Kurt, the Über-Man, she thinks. Nietzsche would have gone gay for him. Shit, Nietzsche would have *blown* him. Her friends warned her: Paige, he has testosterone dripping out his eyes. Uh-huh.

"I wonder," she says now, ignoring the topic, "if there's such a thing as a rehab center for adrenaline addiction."

"You go there for a month and do dull things?" Kurt asks.

She riffs with him. "If you want to BASE

jump, you call a friend and she talks you out of it."

"The meetings must be boring," he says. "And how do you know when you're 'recovered'?"

"I don't know. I guess you just live."

Just live, Kurt thinks.

The phrase itself is instructive.

Kurt comes from a family of ski bums who cobbled together a living working Colorado's slopes, lodges, bars. He moved seven times before he was 16, went to three different high schools—in Vail, Telluride, Steamboat. He didn't mind; in fact, he liked it. New mountains, new slopes, new snow, and he made friends easily. Skied in the winter, climbed in the summer. Hiked, biked, chased (and caught) girls, drank beer, smoked a little weed. Easygoing, genially messy loving home—two parents, three sisters—so he was used to feminine attention.

Three semesters at Northern Colorado, then he decided it wasn't for him. Dropped out, trained his ass off and caught on with the Aspen Mountain Ski Patrol, the elite of the elite alpine rescue squads. Made some dramatic, risky saves, saw some pretty grisly shit. (You pick up the pieces of someone who's fallen 200 feet down a cliff face, it's grisly shit.)

Training, he discovered that running was more a joy than a chore. Made the progression from marathons to ultras. One of the latter took him out to California and he stayed to explore surfing. Hopped over to Kauai and North Shore to do the big waves.

Here's the thing—he was just skin-popping adrenaline; now he's mainlining it. Marathons—cool, but why not run more than a hundred miles across a mountain range with no rest? Downhill skiing—cool, but maybe instead heli-jump onto a recent avalanche and ski down that? Rock climbing? Absolutely, but let's do it without ropes or protection and see how many slopes we can summit in a given period of time.

Surfing—nice, but how about we go out to a freezing, shark-ridden mid-ocean reef into a north swell and try to survive a 70-foot bomber? Parachuting? Try BASE jumping. BASE jumping? Go for wingsuiting. Wingsuiting—let's do it out of a plane instead.

He does it all—the world's greatest poly-extreme athlete.

Because the high lasts for a while, but it doesn't last. He B.B. Kings.

The thrill is gone.

He needs more and more adrenaline.

Now it has to be Xtreme.

Xtremes.

Xtremest.

Has to do something no one's done.

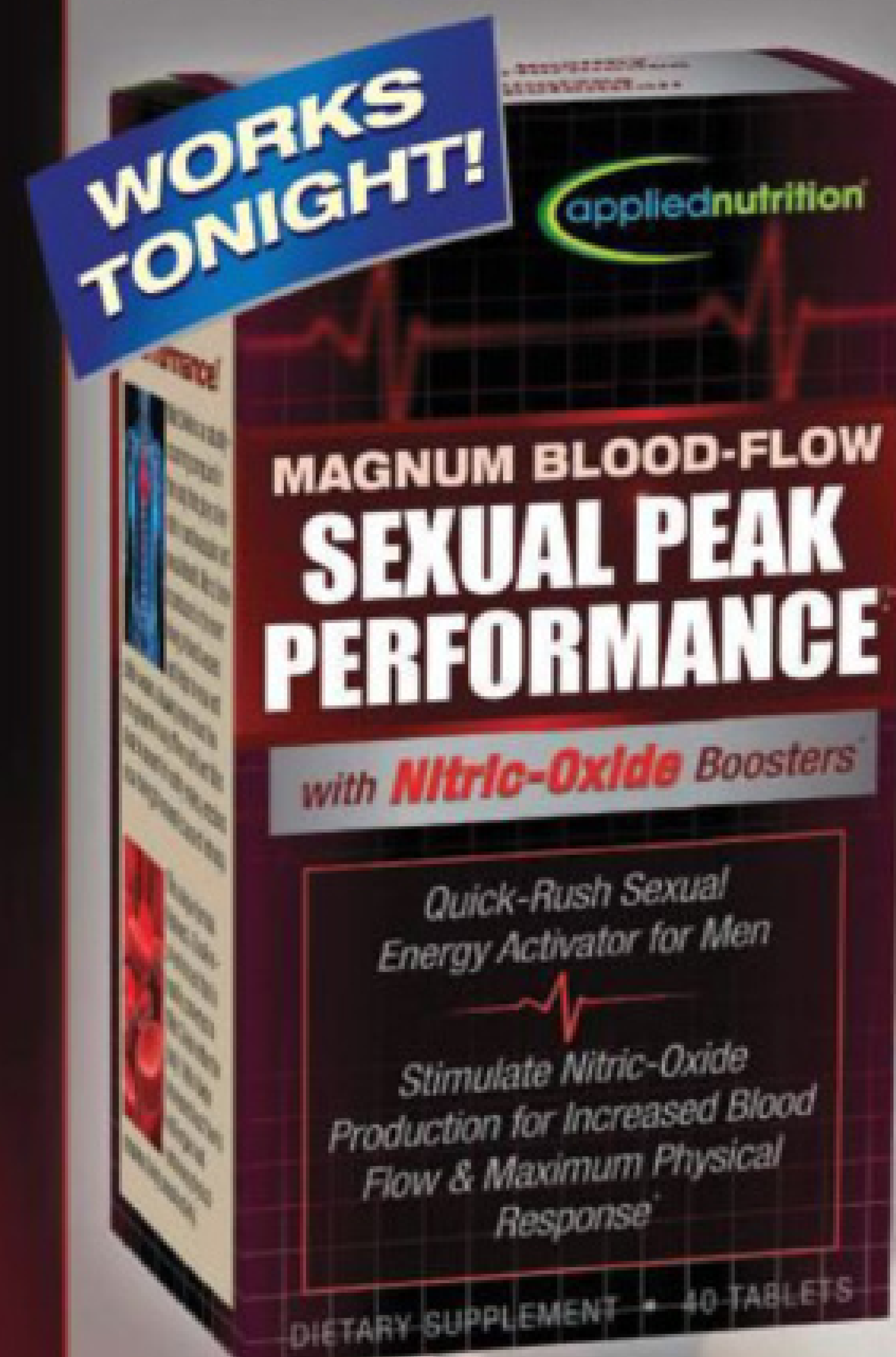
Feel something no one has felt.

Without that, life is just life.

Paige took an alternate route to the same location on the psycho-physiological map. She grew up in Boulder, the daughter and only child of two respected academics. They had *expectations*.

A 4.0 GPA wasn't good enough when there was extra credit to be had. She needed 4.2s and 4.5s. Honors classes and Advanced Placement in every subject. (Shit, she

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thought, I'm going to be halfway through my B.S. before I get out of high school.) If she got a B on a test, tutors were brought in to "get her grades up." (Shit, I might as well be Chinese.)

She needed a sport for her résumé, so she joined the cross-country team.

Salvation.

Time on her own with no one yapping at her, and she loved the simple left-right left-right that seemed to get her brain back in the center. Of course, she was Paige, Perfect Paige, so she had to be great at it. She had expectations. She had to be state champ, state record holder, and with her reindeer legs she was built for it.

But still, it was a relief.

Solitude.

Her against distance.

Her against time.

Her against herself.

She loved it.

Then she discovered rock climbing.

Her parents were appalled.

"What if you fall?"

"I won't fall."

"But what if you do?"

Then I'll be in a peaceful coma and

maybe you'll stop nagging me, she thought but didn't say. Other girls were sneaking out to get high or sleep with boyfriends; Paige was lamming it on dirty weekends in Moab.

Climbing was good, free climbing better.

(Look, Ma, no ropes.)

It was her against height.

Her against fear.

Her against gravity.

(If you can escape gravity, you can escape anything, even your parents. It's the ultimate rebellion.)

Spurning Yale, Smith and Georgetown, she stayed home for undergrad so she could be close to the running trails and the mountains. Did varsity cross-country, but her heart was with the crazies running for three-day stretches across ranges or racing up faces and jumping off them.

Did a semester abroad in Switzerland. Where they keep a good portion of the Alps.

Did her M.S. at the runner's paradise of Corvallis, her Ph.D. at Berkeley, close enough to the Sierras to get in a run and a climb.

The job market was basically a smorgasbord for her, but she selected the relatively modest Colorado State to be close to her beloved mountains and her passion.

Adrenaline pursuit.

Ultramarathons and free climbing.

Now she's hooked.

Just another thrill whore on the cover of *Trail Runner*.

Stanford is trying to steal her. But she doesn't know if she wants to go to Palo Alto.

It would have to be Palo *Soprano*.

Palo Tenor, Palo Alto, Palo Soprano.

High, higher, highest.

"When do we hit the max?" she asks Kurt now. "How will we know?"

"We won't," he says.

We'll be dead.

●

They'd met at the starting line of the Leadville Trail 100, in the freezing predawn. He asked her where she thought she'd finish.

"First."

"In the women's?"

"First," she repeated.

First is first, there are no qualifications.

The LT100, also known as the Race Across the Sky, forces racers to ascend (and descend) 15,600 feet at elevations that range from 9,200 to 12,620. Fewer than half of the starters finish in the maximum-allowed 30 hours.

Ever see a football team gas out in the fourth quarter playing Denver? That's at 5,280 feet. For one hour. With halftimes and huddles and TV time-outs. Gatorade, steroids, pain-numbing injections and multimillion-dollar motivations.

This ordeal *starts* at 9,200.

That means you can't breathe by the time you get there.

Unless you're a mountain goat, like Paige and Kurt.

And then you run, over rugged trails, up and down, sometimes in the dark, sometimes at an elevation more than twice that of Denver's stadium, for almost four marathons. And you'll get some Gatorade or other energy drink, and some protein goop and a granola bar, and maybe some Advil or Tylenol, some Band-Aids for your blistered, bleeding feet, and you do it for more than a full day and at the end of it you'll get....

Nada.

You won't even go to Disney World unless you pay for it yourself.

Just the glory.

The satisfaction.

The joy of pure, unadulterated insanity.

That's extreme, Jack.

The story goes that the founder of the LT100 started it in order to make Leadville famous, and when someone objected that he'd get someone killed (STCKY), he answered, "Well, then we'll be famous, won't we?" Kurt loves that story.

You ask him, he'll tell you he fell in love with Paige right there, when she repeated "First," even though he could barely see her face under the woolly she had pulled down half over her eyes. You ask her, it took her more time. She didn't even like him when she met him, thought he was a sexist, arrogant asshole.

The thing is, he literally chased her.

For 100 miles.

That's love, Jill.

Another way of saying that he chased her is to say that he pushed her, because every time she looked back she saw that asshole



"Yes, you'd better work faster. Your clay isn't the only thing that's starting to harden."

coming and it motivated her because she was not was not was not going to let that arrogant prick catch her, no way.

Of course, another way of saying that he pushed her is to say that she beat him, which she did. As hard as Kurt tried, and he tried *hard*, he couldn't catch her, and the last 10 miles Paige found her kick and left him way behind. She finished first (among women), sixth overall, wasn't happy with it, but she was there waiting when he staggered across the line, 11th among the men.

She rang a cowbell for him.

"Thanks," he said.

"I owed you."

"For what?"

"You paced me."

"You *outpaced* me."

"Yeah, well." She saw blood seeping out of his left shoe. "You'd better have that taken care of."

"You offering?"

"Hell no," she said. "But I'll show you to the aid station."

She walked beside him as he limped to the big tent, and she would now tell you that she started to fall in love with him when she realized that here was a man who damn near killed himself just to keep her within sight.

And it doesn't get much better than that.

They slept together that night.

Literally slept. They were too tired to do anything else.

Kurt was, anyway, and while Paige was a little offended, she had to like a man confident enough to admit that, for one night anyway, he preferred sleep to sex. A little humility, after all, is the difference between an A-Male and an A-Hole.

But should he let her do this tomorrow, he wonders?

Let her? Like I can stop her.

The Basic Rule of their relationship.

They each do what they want.

One force of nature you can't beat.

You can't even *negotiate* with it.

Time.

Ain't no wingsuit gonna give you glide ratio against time. Ain't no parachute gonna slow it down. Ain't no Zodiac gonna pull you out of it. Maybe someday science comes up with the perfect pharmacological cocktail and you live forever, but

Don't count on it, because

It ain't here yet, and

Time will still move on.

So even if you believe in living for today—as Kurt does—tomorrow is going to come, with the day after hard behind, and the brutal truth is that your legs aren't the same at 30 as they were at 20 because nature is planned for designed obsolescence. Dig it, we were born to wear out and be replaced.

There will come a *time* when you just can't do what you used to could.

And if you try?

Nature will kill you for it.

They say speed kills?

Nothing kills like slow.

Just ask Bonk and Gronk. One day they slowed down and became mastodon toe

jam and somebody younger told their story around the old fire.

Time kills.

This is all a three-in-the-morning insomniac meditation for Kurt. He lies there knowing he can't keep doing this extreme shit forever. He has to either

Die young

A real possibility, or

Do something different. Or

Discover another option before he runs out of

Time.

And money.

Because, let's face it—he's making enough to keep doing what he's doing but not enough to put any away. Another way of putting it is that he's not living from paycheck to paycheck, but he is living from extreme to extreme.

He's good with that but here's the problem—

What happens when he can't do the cash-worthy extreme?

And the extreme has to keep getting extremer.

That is, no one's gonna cut him a check to shoot him going *over* a bridge anymore. Only under the bridge. And if he does that, they're not going to sponsor him to do it again.

Compare and contrast—

Elite extreme athletes to other elite athletes.

LeBron can make the same shot 50,000 times and that's a plus. He's setting records. Peyton and Tom B. can complete the same pass over and over again and it's a good thing.

But if Kurt does it—it's boring.

What if LeBron had to slam-dunk a ball into a basket while hurtling down the Grand Canyon? Very cool, yes. Say he does it and survives. Ain't no one interested in seeing him do it *again*.

Say Peyton and Tom had to thread the needle to a receiver while plunging down the face of an 80-foot wave that's about to crash on their heads, or while trotting through Death Valley, or free climbing El Capitan?

Trust me—we'd watch them do it

Once.

Dig it, Kurt would BASE jump, big-wave surf and ultramarathon run just for the sheer joy of it. Over and over again and be blissfully happy. And he'd keep doing it—happily—in the knowledge that he's not getting better at it, but worse, that the replacement parts, as it were, are already on line. But that would be okay. He doesn't need the attention, doesn't need the admiration, ditto the adulation.

He does need the money.

Extreme sports are expensive.

Equipment, transportation, food, lodging, ibuprofen....

Somebody got to pay for it.

And Kurt can see a day when he can't and the sponsors won't.

He can see

Time coming up at him like a canyon floor.

Kurt and Lev talk about it.

One of those steely-silver predawn we-might-die-today conversations.

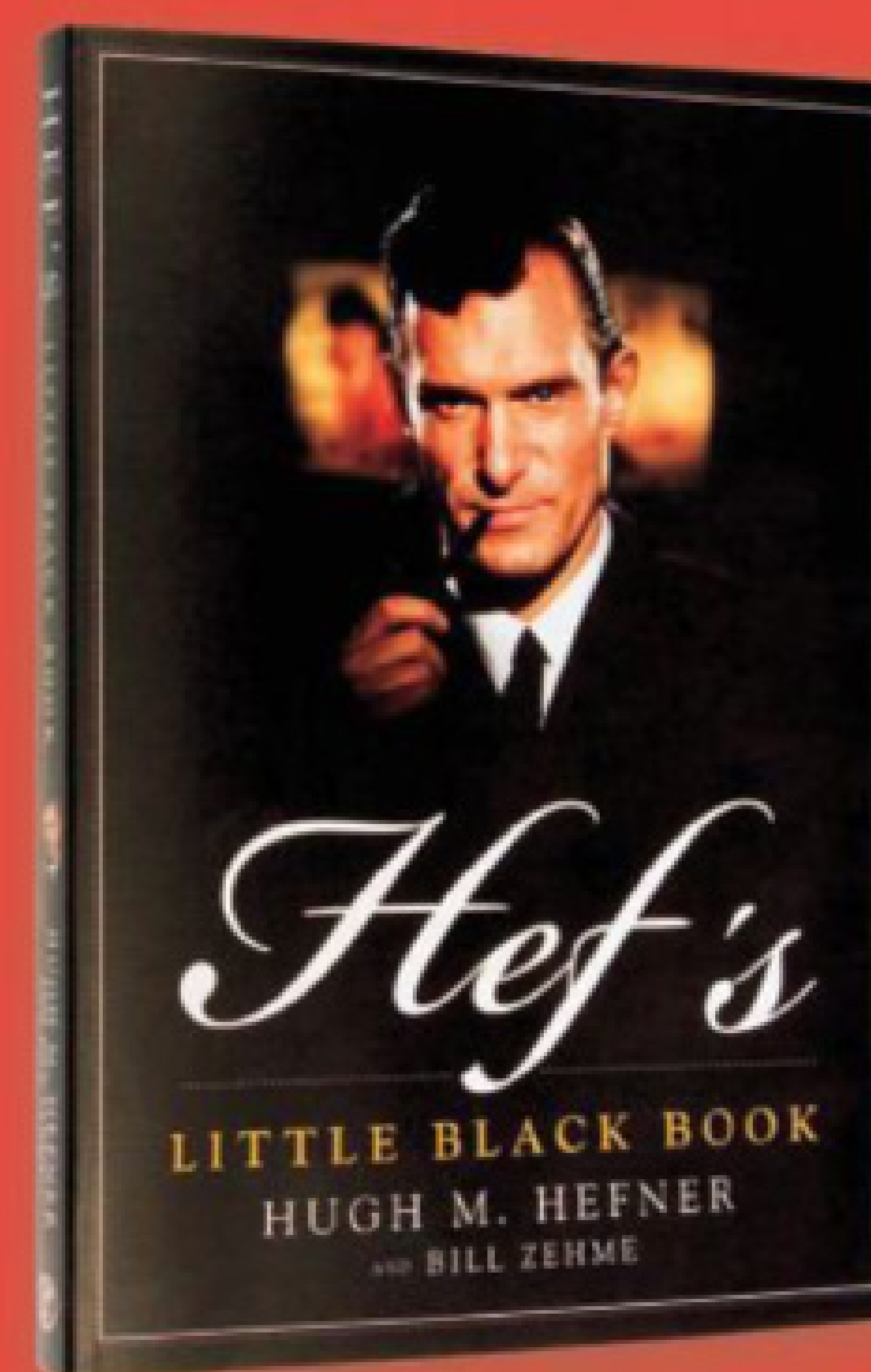
Tends to cut down on the small talk.

Lev is a smart guy.



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He's thought about these issues.

He's even come up with an answer.

"What we need is a big score," Lev says.

"What?" Kurt asks. "A book that turns into a movie? It's been tried; it doesn't work. Maybe if Paige does it, she gets on *Oprah*, but—"

"You're talking millions," Lev goes. "I'm talking billions."

Billions, Kurt thinks.

That's extreme.

Oligarch (n.) 1: a ruler in an oligarchy 2: (esp. in Russia) a very rich businessman with great political influence.

We're more or less concerned with definition number two here.

It turns out that Lev's stepfather is a very rich businessman with heavyweight political connections, especially Russian.

Lev and his stepfather hate each other.

Let's be sure we understand each other here:

Lev and his stepfather *hate* each other.

Lev thinks that his Yegor Chubaiv is a philistine criminal. Yegor thinks that his (trophy) wife's only child is a spoiled brat, a condition he tried to remedy with his big fat oligarch belt until (16-year-old) Lev got a belt (black) of his own, after which Yegor resorted to alternative weapons such

as sarcasm, insult and (eventually) exile.

Lev is now proposing to rob him.

"I'm not a thief," Kurt says.

While Lev generally agrees with Kurt's moral rectitude on this subject, he goes on to explain why it shouldn't be a concern in this particular case.

"Yegor makes his billions," Lev says, "from the illegal sales of armaments. He'll sell to anyone—governments, insurgents, terrorists, drug cartels, mafias of any ethnicity. He is a criminal and a mass murderer. My beloved mother is a disgusting whore for marrying such a man. Taking his money to finance our lifestyle would be a public service."

"That's your rationalization, anyway," Kurt says. Lev won't take his stepfather's money but he will take his stepfather's money.

"The root word of *rationalization*," Lev counters, "is *rational*. I'm merely saying, we're not talking about mugging nuns here, and if it salves your conscience, we could drop a few million on the worthy charity of your choice."

"But we would be the primary charity of our choice."

Lev is sort of a Robin Hood of meritocracy—he believes in robbing from the rich to give to the worthy.

"It's guilt-free money," Lev says. "A rare commodity."

As previously discussed, Kurt is used to making leaps.

Now he has to make the leap from *whether* to *if* to *how*.

"Yegor has a yacht," Lev says.

"Sure."

"Periodically," Lev continues, "he loads that yacht up with cash and sails it to the Cook Islands, where it is stored and laundered."

"I thought they did all that electronically these days."

"They used to," Lev says, "but Interpol has gotten very good at tracking digital transfers. So the criminals have gone retro and now move actual physical cash. What I am proposing is that we use our extreme skills to drop onto that boat in mid-Pacific, relieve it of its ill-gotten gains and escape."

"Sort of *Ocean's 11* with an actual ocean."

"I have no idea what that means," Lev says, "but if it helps your comprehension, yes, all right."

"Theoretically the boat is also heavy with security," Kurt says.

"Not theoretically—actually," Lev answers. "Armed to the clichéd teeth."

"So we'd have to kill people," Kurt says. "Sorry, not in."

Kurt has few scruples, but he knows he can't live—happily, anyway—on blood money.

"It's all in the execution, isn't it?" Lev says. "Pun intended. If we execute properly, we won't have to execute anyone."

Kurt's entire adult life has been about proper execution as a matter of life and death. It's appealing.

"Won't they come after us?" Kurt asks.

"Of course."

"And...."

It doesn't matter, Lev basically responds, because we're just better than they are. Whether it's up (a mountain), down (a wave, the sky), across (desert, ocean), they just can't catch us.

"We put together a team," Lev says, "of like-minded individuals—you, myself, Paige, Latch, whomever we need—with a highly developed and diverse skill set. Fortunately, we know such people, and there will be more than enough money to share out."

"If we survive," Kurt says.

"There's always that," Lev admits.

But, Kurt thinks, there *is* always that.

That's a daily reality.

Kurt's life is a constant risk-reward equation. Lev's proposal has high reward.

But the risk?

Higher.

It doesn't pencil.

It's too...

Extreme.

Kurt says no.

Paige wakes up sad.

Scared, yes, excited, juiced but ennui-blue.

Like, what's next after this?

What's the next bigger high?

The junkie's lament.

Kurt says, "I'm beginning to think that maybe you shouldn't do this."



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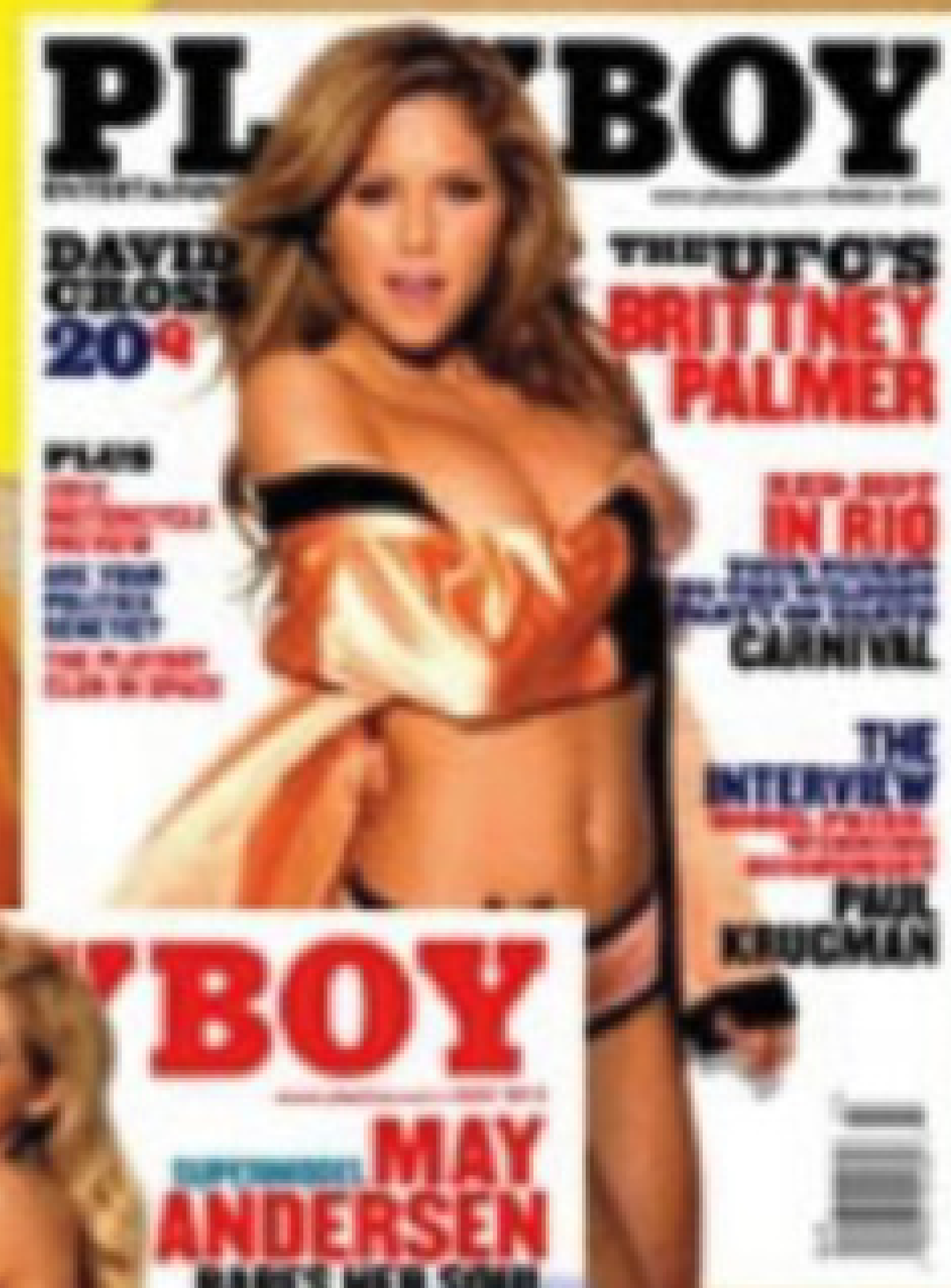
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And this, Paige thinks, from a man who is so absolute he doesn't believe in adverbs.
 "You don't think I should jump?" Paige asks.
 It is windy.
 The hotel window rattles.
 "I don't think you should go under the bridge," he says.
 "If you're going, I'm going," she says.
 "It's not a competition, Paige."
 Since when? she thinks.
 Run harder, ski harder, fly harder, fuck harder, come harder—"er" is a competition.
 To wit:
 "Maybe I don't think *you* should do it," she says.
 His shrug is eloquent.
 I have to. You don't.
 I'm the YouTube sensation.
 "So superior," Paige says.
 But he is.
 Übermensch is by definition superior.
 "I'm doing it," Paige says.
 Kurt shrugs again.
 Übermensches believe in individual freedom and responsibility.
 Take that from someone, you've taken her life.
 You don't do that to someone you love.

Kurt's wingsuit is black-and-white (of course).
 Paige's is pink.
 "A girlie-girl wingsuit," she says.
 She calls that skyrony.
 Latchkey rocks a Superman motif. (Would have gone with Underdog but they don't make them.)
 Lev's is midnight blue.
 They look like Marvel Comics superheroes as they walk toward the plane.
 The wind, gusting in out of the west, freaks the sponsors out.
 "Maybe not today," Jay tells Kurt.
 Even though a crowd waits on the bridge and the cameras are in place. But no one wants *that* deposit in the karma bank. No one wants that weight tilting the scales of astral justice.
 "No," Kurt responds.
 Today is fine.
 Today is the day we have.
 "Doesn't have to be," Jay says.
 "The forecast says it's a three-day blow," Kurt answers. "It will be fine."
 "Any doubt," Jay says, "pull out."
 Again, words to live by.
 Walking to the plane, Paige says to Kurt, "You're afraid of being afraid."
 "Isn't that a tautology?"
 "You're not afraid to free-fly under a bridge, but you're afraid that other people will think you're afraid," she says. "What is that?"
 "Untrue."
 "Totally true."
 "Something is either true or it isn't," Kurt says. "You can't have relative degrees of truth."
 "Totally."

This is the plan.
 Kurt and Paige go out first and do their thing.
 Land in the river, gather up their stuff and crew for Lev and Latchkey, who do the second jump.

"Fair is fair," Paige says regarding pickup duty.
 They do it for us, we do it for them.
 And just as if you're Kurt and Paige, you want to see Latchkey and Lev waiting down there to fish you out, if you're Latchkey and Lev, you want to see Kurt and Paige because you know that they would die, if necessary, to bring you back.
 You get tangled in the chute underwater, you want Kurt diving for you because (a) he's a world-class waterman, and (b) he's never going to give up, and (c) you'll have cool-headed Paige directing him what to do.
 So that's the plan.
 That's the way you visualize it with everything going perfectly.
 You do your jump.
 You live.
 You let the adrenaline settle as you watch your friends come down and then you pick them up.
 Beer time.
 The four of them get into the plane.
 Your basic Cessna 182.

From 12,000 feet above the Royal Gorge.
 They can see the bridge.

*They strap on their helmets.
 They turn on the GoPro
 cameras to record the trip in
 HD. This is the Information
 Age. Nothing is real without
 a video record.*

The people on the bridge, looking up expectantly.
 Can see Brian the photog lowering himself off the bridge on a harness, getting ready to shoot.
 Can't see the red flags, but then again, they're under the bridge.
 Can see the red canyon walls.
 Way down they can see the silver ribbon that is the river.
 They strap on their helmets. Headsets inside the helmets and throat mikes so they can talk and listen to each other.
 This is the Information Age.
 They turn on the GoPro cameras to record the trip in HD. This is the Information Age. Nothing is real without a video record. More info, more data.
 Computers like wristwatches tell time, distance and speed.
 Kurt takes one more shot at it. "You sure you want to do this?"
 "No," Paige says.
 But nothing is duller than certainty.

Jumping out of a plane is fundamentally different from launching off a cliff or other static structure because the plane is

moving, already creating airspeed. You have to be more careful coming out of the airplane because you might go Veg-O-Matic, i.e., fly into (or more accurately *through*) the propellers.
 Once airborne (the word is cautionary if you really explore it), the flier controls his or her descent through body posture, angle and maneuver against or with the wind, by changing the relative tension of the squirrel-like fabric until she or he comes to a place where it is deemed desirable to pull the ripcord and float gently to earth or water.
 That's the theory, and among Kurt's favorite passages of instructional copy may be found the following: *The absence of a vertical stabilizing surface results in a little damping action around the yaw axis, so poor flying technique can result in a spin that might require an active effort on the part of the flier to stop.*
 Kurt isn't sure what a passive effort might entail, but he knows that when you go into a spinout you'd better give it "active effort" in a hurry or you'll die, because the velocity of the spin causes thousands of microconcussions that soon render your brain incapable of any effort, active or passive.
 Latchkey actually likes to spin out.
 ("What's a little more brain damage?")
 Yeah, Latchkey's crazy but not *that* crazy—he's flying *over* the bridge.
 "I know my limitations," is what he says.
 A blast of wind knocks the plane sideways.
 The nudge of a psycho on a subway platform.
 The shark bumping against the life raft.
 What they should do is call it off.
 But these are people who have rarely done what they should.
 Paige goes out first.
 Kurt goes tumbling after.

Kurt spreads his arms and legs to activate the fabric wings, then he pushes his shoulders forward to get velocity.
 Straightens his legs to reduce drag.
 Tucks his chin into his neck.
 Then he brings his arms back in.
 The greater the mass of the wings, the slower the flight.
 A flier can slow himself down to just over 60 with maximum spread.
 Kurt isn't interested in slow.
 Only fast.
 Keeps his arms in to hit a buck 50.

Paige has maybe 15 seconds to decide.
 Over or under.
 Try to grab the flags or don't.
 You have to make small moves in a wingsuit.
 Small adjustments.
 Big moves can send you into a spin.
 She sees the bridge below her and knows that it's the moment to spread her arms, open the wings, maneuver, decide.
 But it's so hard.
 So hard to let go of the speed.
 Tamp down the adrenaline.
 Break off their dance, their lovemaking.

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As the bridge comes up at her——
“Break off!” Kurt yells.
She does.
Opens her wings and “slows” to only 100.
Ninety.
Eighty.
Arches her spine downward to control her angle of attack and turns her neck to the right to look at him and he looks back but he doesn’t open.

One eighty-five.
Fast, faster, fastest.
Even the tiny act of raising his right arm to look at the dial knocks him off course but he shifts his left shoulder and straightens.
Seventy-degree angle.
Cuh-raazy.
Running out of clock to pull up.
But it doesn’t get any better than this.
Adrenaline coursing, wind slapping him, this is freedom, the will to live or die, he aims for the bottom steel beam and sees the flags.
It will never get any better than this, so——
What’s the fucking point?

The wind takes her.
Throws her sideways and sends her spinning.
Out of control.
The world whirling around her—the sky, the bridge, the canyon, the sky—her neck feels like it might fracture, head fly off. She sees him for only a microsecond as she spins, his black figure plunging, and she knows he’s hit the max but Paige...
Decides to live.
Superb athlete.
Prime conditioning.
Cool head.
Indomitable will.
She gets very active, arches her back up, points her face up toward the sun and flies.
Up.
A graceful arc up and over the bridge and then she arcs down, tucks her chin and hits the ripcord.
Floating down toward the river.
Looks back toward the bridge and sees Kurt coming.
Like a stooping falcon diving at its prey.
Paige has seen a falcon kill.
The violent impact, the spray of blood and feathers.

Kurt aims at the bottom of the bridge at an impossible speed, aiming for the bottom, cutting it so close, too close.
Wind in his ears, he can’t hear the scream of the crowd.
He spreads his wings.
The steel beam comes at his face.
He goes under the bridge.
Reaches his arms up for the flags and grabs them.
The motion throws him up toward the steel beam.

She loses sight of him.

He’s gone.
Then he emerges under the bridge.
His chute opens.
And Paige, the scientist, thanks the gods of earth and air.

They meet in the water and swim to the Zodiac.
“Amazing!” Kurt hears Jay scream through the headset. “Freaking amazing!”
They climb into the raft and look up.
“I hate you,” Paige says to him as they watch Lev’s flight.
“Easy to do,” Kurt says. “And I understand.”

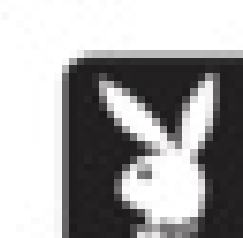
Lev’s flight is beautiful.
This is the day that we have and it’s a beautiful day.
Then it goes wrong.

Latchkey is coming fast.
Wind buffets him but he’s in control.
He is, after all, a falcon reborn.
Almost over the bridge when the down-draft hits him.
And drives him into the railing.
At 80 per.
Paige has seen a falcon kill.
The violent impact.
The spray of blood and feathers as the crowd on the bridge screams, moans, “Oh no oh no.”
Look or shield their eyes as Latchkey makes YouTube.

They scatter Latchkey’s ashes in Moab.
Among the red rocks that he scrambled up and jumped from.
Kurt cries.
Paige sobs.
Lev bought a falcon (\$57K on the black market, no wonder he needs money) and releases it.
Into the vast blue Western sky to be reborn.

That night the tribe gathers at McStiff’s (the name is cautionary if you really explore it) for the wake.
The fliers, the jumpers, the climbers, the runners, the ultras, the extremes, the restless, the mad souls——
And drink beer and whiskey and tell Latchkey stories.
Remember when, remember when, remember that time Latchkey.
Somewhere in there Kurt takes Lev outside into the parking lot.
Under a yellow moon and says...
“I’m in.”
“Yes?”
“Let’s do it.”
This last thing.
This.
Extreme.

(To be continued....)



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TONY HSIEH

(continued from page 52)

but ultimately it's just a brand. I don't think we'll always live in a world run by Google. The amount of time it takes to build a brand and reach a lot of people keeps compressing. At some point, someone else will come along and be the new Google or Facebook or Twitter. We just don't know what those things are yet. I can't even keep up with all the new social media stuff, but I'm already hearing kids in high school comment that Twitter is for old people. We already know the next generation doesn't care about e-mail. People forget how early on things are in terms of digital technology. Everyone thinks it's been around forever, but it's been only a couple of decades.

PLAYBOY: Where do you visualize it going?

HSIEH: Have you heard of the singularity? It's this idea that technology is changing so quickly that at some point we'll have technology that's changed by technology. Right now, technology is still directed by humans, but there are predictions that within the next 40 to 60 years artificial intelligence could surpass human intelligence.

PLAYBOY: What would that look like?

HSIEH: It's completely unfathomable. That's the whole point. We can't imagine it. But I believe we're already in a pre-singularity phase. There's all this buzz about 3-D printing right now. The prediction is that 3-D printing will have a bigger impact on society 20 years from now than the internet had in the past 20 years. It's crazy to think about, but we're almost at a point where a 3-D printer will be able to print out another 3-D printer. When that happens, it's kind of game over. Just drop one off in Africa and it will spread itself through every village and city, and the whole world changes. It's exciting and terrifying at the same time.

PLAYBOY: You spent a lot of time at raves when you were younger. What did you get out of those all-night dance parties?

HSIEH: A huge amount. In the beginning, it was this idea of peace, love, unity and respect—the guiding principles of the culture. You could talk to anyone, with no ulterior motive; it was about being open to people. But the most important understanding was about something called the hive switch. Psychologist Jonathan Haidt writes about it in *The Righteous Mind*. Basically, if you look at nature, you discover that certain animals, like chimpanzees and wolves, compete for food and mates, while others—bees are the best example—organize themselves for the greater good. They live together as a unified force because the DNA is the same. Bees are always working together for the benefit of the hive.

As humans, we go back and forth between both states. Serving our self-interest is kind of the default mode. But certain things trigger the hive switch and cause us to behave in a way that makes us care about the greater good. When you experience it, it is pure awe, like when you see something in nature that's bigger than yourself. A synchronized movement does that as well, which is why when you join the military

you spend the first six weeks just learning how to march in units.

For me, the hive switch got turned on by raves. It was a feeling of unity with the other people in the space, unity with the music and with one another. That's why I go to Burning Man. The art, especially at night, just puts you in a state of awe. These things are hard to describe until you've experienced them, I guess.

PLAYBOY: You really have an open mind. The question has to be asked: How much weed do you smoke?

HSIEH: [Laughs and pauses] Let me answer this way: I think there's a lot of interesting research that looks at the health effects of pot versus alcohol, and pot certainly doesn't have a negative health impact. And since Washington and Colorado have legalized its use, it's something to keep an eye on.

PLAYBOY: You're avoiding the question. What about ecstasy? Nobody was going to raves in those days without it, right?

HSIEH: Okay, my hesitation in answering questions like these is that there's a perception that you need to do drugs in order to have certain experiences. People have a visceral reaction to that idea, so I don't like to state a preference one way or the other. People think with raves, for instance, that ecstasy is what that scene was all about. I mean, there were definitely people who went to raves in those years and were on ecstasy. I don't have a judgment about that, but for me it was really the feeling of unity I described.

Did you ever see the movie *Milk*? I generally don't get teary-eyed or cry out of sadness in movies. In that movie there's the scene where gay rights activist Harvey Milk gets shot. That didn't make me cry. What made me teary-eyed was the scene toward the end when thousands of people show up for a candlelight vigil. That was really uplifting. To me, it wasn't about Milk; it wasn't about his politics; it wasn't about his death. It was about the response he triggered in all those people.

PLAYBOY: Incidentally, you've been rather ambiguous in discussing your sex life. Can you explain what you meant when you told *The New York Times*, "I hang out with a lot of people, guys and girls. I don't really have this one person I am dating right now. I am hanging out with multiple people, and some people I hang out with more than others"?

HSIEH: Oh that. Because of the way it was worded, everyone started assuming I'm bisexual, which I'm not. I meant it as an analogy.

PLAYBOY: You're 40 and single. Is monogamy overrated?

HSIEH: I think, biologically, from a Darwinian perspective, it is. From a purely evolutionary point of view, the guy who's monogamous will have fewer copies of his genes in the next generation than a guy who's not. I think it's pretty hard to find one partner and call it a day. Using the analogy of friends, why not find just one friend and call it a day? The answer is because you get a different type of connection, different conversations, different experiences with different friends. I would

say the same thing is true on the dating side.

PLAYBOY: You've mentioned before that you're a fan of the literature of pickup artistry, including Neil Strauss's *The Game*. Do those techniques work for you?

HSIEH: I think I have different goals. *The Game* is more focused on how to pick up girls, but I found it interesting in thinking about how to use similar concepts to build relationships in general. I've read a lot of stuff by people in that world, so I don't remember who said what, but I remember hearing that if you're going on a date with a girl, the best thing to do is change locations every half hour or hour and do something different. Basically, at the end, if you've gone to seven different locations, it will have the same effect on memory as going on seven dates in single locations. So it's about time compression and memory and so on. The point is to seduce a girl faster, but that technique has other applications as well. It's part of what I'm trying to do with Downtown Project. When people come visit us we basically hop from location to location to location, so even though they've been here only two or three nights, it will seem as though they've been here two weeks. It'll have a big impact on their memory. Humans remember things in terms of geography and number of stories. I want a city where all this stuff is within walking distance so you can have a bunch of different experiences.

PLAYBOY: Just to confirm: You're designing a city based on techniques used to get into women's pants?

HSIEH: Well, we're not using the techniques to pick up girls. But I did have someone here from that world who said what we're trying to do is basically seduce people into moving to downtown Vegas.

PLAYBOY: And have a Tesla in every garage.

HSIEH: It's true. We placed the largest order in the United States for Teslas. Project 100 is going to have car sharing and bike sharing, and we'll also have a bunch of ultra-compact electric vehicles called Twizys. But yeah, we bought 100 Teslas.

PLAYBOY: What's your opinion of Tesla's chief executive, Elon Musk?

HSIEH: He's not doing enough, that slacker. He's got to think bigger. That was sarcasm, if you couldn't tell. I have huge respect for all he's doing. It's definitely a company I admire.

PLAYBOY: What other companies make the list?

HSIEH: I definitely like and appreciate the Virgin brand. I've always been interested in anything that's a consumer-facing brand. Red Bull, Apple, In-N-Out Burger. Great service for the masses. Consistency. The employees seem happy; the customers seem happy.

PLAYBOY: By the way, did you really order the "100 by 100" off the secret menu at In-N-Out?

HSIEH: Absolutely. I like a challenge. It was Halloween; we were hungry. If you don't know about it, the 100 by 100 is a massive burger. It's 100 patties and 100 cheese slices, all within two buns. There were eight of us, and we ate the whole thing. The plan was to go out and party the rest



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of the night, but we just ended up lying on the apartment floor in a collective food coma. But we were happy.

PLAYBOY: You talk about happiness frequently, but is it realistic to think we should be happy all the time? As Louis C.K. has said, "No one has a full year of love and happiness. I mean, even rich, happily married, in-love people have diarrhea three times a year."

HSIEH: I wouldn't characterize myself as someone constantly seeking happiness, but I do think it's worth striving for. In my book I talk about a framework from the research perspective that happiness is about four things: perceived control, perceived progress, connectedness—meaning the number and depth of your relationships—and being part of something bigger than yourself that gives you meaning or purpose. On a daily basis I'm conscious of which of those areas are present and which need work, whether it's for myself or how we think about making employees happy or making customers happy.

PLAYBOY: Zappos has a 365-day return policy with free shipping both ways. That keeps customers happy, but people must abuse the hell out of it.

HSIEH: There have been a few isolated cases. You hear about the occasional person taking a pair of hiking boots and going off into the mountains for three muddy weeks before trying to return them. We let them know we're not a shoe-rental company. But we actually don't mind when customers order 100 pairs of shoes and return 99. We're trying to simulate the experience of going to a shoe store where the salesperson comes back and forth with box after box of shoes until you find the ones you like.

PLAYBOY: Why was Kanye West picking on Zappos last fall? He accused you of "selling shit product" on Bret Easton Ellis's podcast.

HSIEH: When that story came out, we were shocked. It was totally from left field, but we used it as an opportunity to have fun. We created an actual shit product—a toilet plunger in a toilet bowl—and put it up for sale on Zappos.com for \$100,000.

PLAYBOY: Did Kanye buy one?

HSIEH: Not yet. I haven't heard a word from him since. But the reviews our customers wrote on the page are really funny. It's weird. Celebrities usually love us. Garth Brooks came to Vegas and bought something like 400 pizzas for the entire staff.

PLAYBOY: You were a judge on *The Celebrity Apprentice* with Donald Trump. Do you ever see him around town?

HSIEH: I don't know Donald very well. We interacted briefly during the filming, but his daughter Ivanka and I have become friends. She's one of the smartest, most authentic, most genuine businesswomen I know, and I have a lot of respect for her. We had a great time when she and her husband came to check out everything going on in downtown Vegas and with Downtown Project, and somehow we all ended up eating deep-fried Twinkies at the end of the night. That's probably the first and last time I'll ever do that.

PLAYBOY: By the way, what is the secret to getting over e-mail glut?

HSIEH: You have to get up four hours earlier than you normally would. [laughs] Actually, there's a technique I like called Yesterbox. I'm able to stay on top of things because every morning when I wake up, in my inbox or to-do list are yesterday's e-mails. I know exactly how many e-mails I need to get through, and there's a sense of progress. At some point there's completion. Then, any e-mails that come in today become tomorrow's mail. So some days, if I've gotten up early enough, I'm done with all my e-mail obligations by noon and can stop stressing about that part of life.

PLAYBOY: What other websites or apps do you like?

HSIEH: I think what Inside.com and the Inside app are doing is pretty interesting.

PLAYBOY: Inside is a news aggregator. Are you one of those rich guys looking to buy a newspaper?

HSIEH: [Laughs] No, I'd rather steal one.

PLAYBOY: What's next for Zappos?

HSIEH: Today we sell a lot more than shoes. We've been making a big push into clothing. Looking ahead, we want to continue to build on having the very best customer service and customer experience out there, and that could translate into any realm. There could be a Zappos airline or a Zappos hotel or something else that stays in line with our core values.

PLAYBOY: Do you have any plans to deliver products by drone?

HSIEH: Not yet, but that would be pretty cool. We had a demo once at the Zappos plaza, and people were really excited.

PLAYBOY: The retail landscape is pretty dismal for many companies. If you were a struggling company like JCPenney or Barnes & Noble, what would you do to turn things around?

HSIEH: Listen to the customers. With brick-and-mortar retail in general there hasn't been much innovation in a very long time. Buying from a store today is not that different from buying from a store 30 or 50 years ago. But if you look at the innovation at the Apple Store, let's say, you see that success comes in figuring out how to take the customer experience to the next level. That's true online and offline. That's certainly where we found success.

PLAYBOY: Incidentally, how can someone get a job at Zappos?

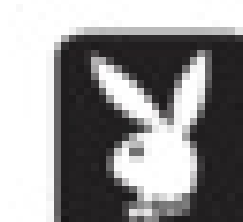
HSIEH: We're hiring. All our jobs are posted online.

PLAYBOY: What are you looking for?

HSIEH: People who are right for our culture. We do two sets of interviews. The hiring manager will interview for the standard stuff like fit within a team, relevant experience, technical ability and so on. Then our HR department does a separate set of interviews purely for culture fit, and those can get interesting. Applicants have to pass both assessments to be hired. We've said no to a lot of smart, talented people we knew could make an immediate impact on our top or bottom line. If they didn't get the job, it could have been because they weren't nice to the Zappos shuttle-bus driver on the way from the airport. And you have to like living in Vegas.

PLAYBOY: The history of famous people living in Vegas is kooky at best—Howard Hughes, Elvis, Liberace. Do you think you'll stay for the long term?

HSIEH: I have no plans to leave. I think the world we're creating here is very different from the one they lived in. It's turning out to be a different world in general for all of us.



"According to your journal, you're paying way too much for sex."

EL RAID

(continued from page 68)

Largo, one of two clubs in Melo—which, with some 50,000 residents, is the capital city of the Cerro Largo department. (Uruguay is divided into 19 departments—states, essentially.)

“Horses are a huge part of the culture and economy of Cerro Largo,” Nacho says, “from back in the days when the caudillos were living in Uruguay’s version of the Wild West. The Raid is really a part of the whole tradition of Melo.”

It was Nacho and Marcos’s father, Jorge Cardozo, who founded the Centro Raidista club in the early 1980s. Behind Jorge’s house is a small barn where Mi Santa is boarded with a couple of other horses, while the house itself—its stucco walls and tiled roof modestly middle class by American standards but a mansion in Melo—is a shrine to El Raid. Trophies and framed photos cover the countertops and cabinets. In each of the photos, many of them black-and-white, is evidence of the key difference between El Raid and all other endurance horse races, the crucial factor that makes

comparisons to the Tevis Cup or any other competition irrelevant.

The vehicles.

Unlike other endurance racing, which takes place on trails, El Raid is run on commuter roads: 30 kilometers and back, an hour rest period and veterinary inspection, then another 15 kilometers and back. During the race, trucks speed alongside the horses, each with a numbered placard that matches the number painted on the flank of their horse. The stud acts as a sort of mobile pit crew, spraying the horse from a hose connected to barrels of water in the truck bed so the animal, averaging 20 miles an hour, doesn’t overheat. As horses pass and jockey for position, trucks swerve, collide, brake and speed up. It’s part Kentucky Derby, part Daytona 500, a chaotic mash-up of *Seabiscuit* and *Mad Max*.

Today, Raid is a major sport, second only to soccer. There are several magazines dedicated to it and TV and radio broadcasts of events. Racing season lasts from early March through late November, and almost every club hosts a race, meaning there is a race nearly every weekend for nine months—42 races in 2013. Most are 90 kilometers, though they can range

from 80 to 115 kilometers. First prize is usually 100,000 pesos, or about \$5,000. If \$5,000 doesn’t sound like much, consider the average Uruguayan’s yearly income: roughly \$13,000. No matter how many horses the field comprises, one fifth of them receive some prize money—provided they survive the race, of course. And that’s far from guaranteed.

Salón comunal translates to “community center.” The one housing Nacho and the rest of the stud is a bare cinder-block shelter. The men unfurl bedrolls around the perimeter of the concrete floor, though there’s little need. Just after midnight, when they’ve had their fill of the pig, they drive into town for the *remate*, the Raid betting system.

Raid is more than a race. Uruguay is roughly the size of the U.S. state of Florida, but its population is less than 3.5 million, compared with Florida’s nearly 20 million. Almost half the country lives in the capital city of Montevideo. Only one other Uruguayan city has more than 100,000 residents; most have only a few thousand. There are few restaurants and even fewer movie theaters. Soccer is popular, but of the 16 teams in Uruguay’s premier league, only two are based outside Montevideo. So the weekend El Raid comes to town is a hedonistic free-for-all, a sleep-deprived orgy of drinking and eating and gambling and dancing. It puts the Churchill Downs infield to shame. Hell, it puts Coachella to shame. The only equivalent is what Pamplona’s Fiesta de San Fermin must have been in Hemingway’s time, before all the tourists ruined it.

Things kick off Saturday morning. Spectators, drinking beer and yerba mate and eating chorizo sandwiches called *choripán*, gather at a corral to watch the horses check in and undergo an initial veterinary inspection. This is followed in the early evening by shorter races—roughly 10 kilometers—when there’s even more drinking and eating. Many of the younger men, including Nacho and his stud, dress casually, in polo shirts and hoodies. But even they wear at least one traditional item—the beret, the *bombachas*—as a tribute to their ancestors. Uruguay is an impressively progressive country. It has universal health care. It averages a 96 percent voter turnout as the result of mandatory voting. (If you don’t cast a ballot, you’re fined.) It has legalized gay marriage and marijuana. But when it comes to haberdashery, it is enviably stuck in the past.

The country is also lagging in technology—at least when it comes to the *remate*. There are no tote boards, no pari-mutuel windows. The process is closer to a live auction. There are multiple rounds of betting, and a horse can be bet on by only one person—whoever offers the highest bet each round. Bets are for “win” only; there is no “place” or “show.” If the horse you bet on wins, you receive the total money bet in that particular round—minus a 30 percent cut for the local club. There are as many rounds as there are people who wish to bet. There is also a roughshod strategy. Betting in the early rounds yields a bigger pot for the winner, since there are more people eager to



“Can I call you back, Tina? I’m right in the middle of a *ménage à... hey! Anybody know the French word for 11?*”

place their bets—and on a wider variety of horses—than in the later rounds. Yet you also have to put down—and risk losing—more money than in the later rounds, when there are fewer bettors to compete against. To an outsider, it's an utterly confounding, absolutely maddening system.

"We just don't have the technology here to do real-time betting like in the States," Leo explains. "That's just the way we do it. We like it that way."

The *remate* for Sunday's Raid is held Saturday night in the Varela Raid club's headquarters: a large, hot, windowless hall with an attached bar facing the city square, which this weekend is filled with carnival rides, game booths and *choripán* vendors. Hundreds of people jam the hall, overflowing the many tables and chairs and squeezing tight against the walls, abandoning their places only for more beer. On a stage, a large white canvas is strung between a pair of tall wooden beams. Onto this is projected a spreadsheet with the names of all 51 horses entered in the race and columns for each round of betting, updated by laptop. An MC paces the stage, rapidly yelling the horses' names and escalating bets into a microphone while pointing to the flashing hands of bettors. At a table near the stage, a group of officials exchange money for claim tickets.

Some horses don't receive a single bet. Most horses, including Mi Santa, receive bets of \$10 or \$20 per round. Then there is the favorite, Ciriaco, a hulking bay representing Club Nacional in the city of Sarandí del Yí. So far in the 2013 season, Ciriaco has competed in six Raids and won four. The bets on him range from \$250 to \$700 per round. Since bets and total pots vary from round to round, overall odds are not easy to tabulate or even applicable. But Mi Santa's chances of finishing ahead of Ciriaco are clearly slim at best. A total of \$200 is bet on Mi Santa—most of it coming from Nacho and his stud—and \$3,500 is bet on Ciriaco. Between the short races Saturday, Sunday morning's Raid and a few short races Sunday afternoon, the weekend's combined wagering will total \$50,000. Saturday night's *remate* begins at eight P.M. and doesn't finish until two A.M., after 28 rounds of betting.

By then, the night is just beginning. As is tradition, a dance is held, this time in a drab ballroom on the opposite side of the square from the Varela Raid club. At three A.M. the line stretches down the block and around the corner. Inside, the dance floor is packed with couples grinding to live *cumbia* and singles cruising for partners, their faces obscured by the scanning fluorescent spotlights and the smoke machine's artificial cumulus. The guys are still in gaucho garb, but the girls pay little mind to sartorial tradition. Their heels are high, their dresses cut low. Many of them are still dancing at six A.M., as Mi Santa trots by on her way to the starting line.

•

Ruta No. 14 bisects Uruguay east to west. In the summer, the road is used primarily by those bound for the beach town of La Coronilla. During the rest of the year it's busy with big rigs transporting milk, harvested crops and other provisions from

the farms that dot the pastureland spanning to the horizon. It's still dark as 6:35 comes and goes. Nothing happens. I wait in the bed of Leo's truck with the rest of Mi Santa's stud, about a mile from the starting line. A car unaffiliated with the race speeds past, away from town. Wherever they're headed, they know to leave early. Later in the morning, a milk truck isn't so wise and is forced to the side of the road for more than an hour.

At last: the glimmer of approaching headlights and the faint sound of hooves. It starts as the patter of light rain, builds to a steady drumming and crescendos to an ear-pounding hailstorm. And yet, in the enveloping dark, still none of the horses are visible, only the headlights fast bearing down.

Finally the lead horse passes, ridden by a female jockey. (There are one or two in every Raid, rarely more.) Then a second horse, followed by a third and a fourth. One by one they go, the orderliness as magnificent as the animals themselves. Then the scene unravels into complete disarray. Trucks overtake us in a flood, streaming by on both sides, kicking up dust and grass as they brake hard, the men in the truck beds signaling with raised arms that there is congestion ahead. Most trucks have four men packed into the bed; one has four in the bed, four squeezed into the rear of the cab and two up front. Most of the men stand casually in the beds without holding on to anything or sit perilously on the edge. They look unfazed by the unfolding frenzy, smoking and sipping yerba maté and passing thermoses of hot water between the speeding trucks. I flop around in Leo's bed, struggling not to get thrown as the wind whips dirt into my eyes and mouth.

With little distance separating the horses, especially early on, and anywhere from 20 to 100 trucks trying to stay abreast of their horse—on a two-lane road, no less—the result is sheer chaos: Drivers honk and yell at one another as members of the stud dangle off the side of the truck with one hand as they lean out to spray down the horses. Steam rises off the charging steeds as they're doused. Jockeys dart their mounts between trucks to the other side of the road to get ahead of the pack. A police motorcycle weaves and wobbles between horses and trucks, as if ensuring some measure of order. A few compact cars with press signs on their dashboards zip by, providing the radio play-by-play. Every truck is tuned to the broadcast, and every truck's windows are rolled down, giving the effect of one giant loudspeaker shattering the early-morning tranquility of the Uruguayan countryside.

Around mile 10 the sun begins to break through the clouds. Spectators line the roads. By now the horses have divided into three groups: in the lead group, half a dozen; in the second, 20 or so; followed by the rest. This is typical for a Raid, and it means nothing. Although Ciriaco is in the lead group, most of these horses won't finish. The pace is simply too fast.

Mi Santa is near the front of the second group. Through the cab's sliding rear window, I ask Leo how she looks.

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"Good," is all he says, with a hint of surprise, leaving me to suspect she's exceeding even the stud's most optimistic hopes. I find myself wondering if Mi Santa can actually win this damn thing. Soon, though, I'm faced with another, entirely alternate likelihood. It is the one scenario that, in all the narratives I envisioned for this weekend, somehow never occurred to me.

It happens just as the horses make the 30-kilometer turn and begin heading back toward the rest area: Mi Santa exhibits an odd tic. Every few strides she jerks her head to the left, as if annoyed by something behind her. It's a small change in her poise, barely noticeable. She isn't losing speed and Leo hasn't commented on it. Atop her, Maximiliano de Cunto remains stone-faced. I try to dismiss it, but I can't: Something is wrong with Mi Santa.

The Federación employs strict rules to protect the horses. Along with the veterinary inspection the day before the race, horses must have blood drawn for drug testing. Blood is tested again, along with urine, on the Monday after the race. If the results come back positive for those horses within the money, they forfeit their winnings. And the jockey and owner of any horse that tests positive for doping are suspended for one year.

There's another veterinary inspection during the rest period—after the first 20 minutes of which the horse must exhibit a heart rate of 65 beats or less per minute or face disqualification. Horses that pass the pulse test can still be disqualified at the veterinarians' discretion. Vets can also label a horse "with observation," which means they noticed something but can't definitively say it merits a disqualification. In such cases it is left to the owner to decide whether or not to proceed with the last 30 kilometers of the race. However, if a "with observation"

horse continues and suffers an injury, the owner faces a suspension of anywhere from six months to life. And after a horse runs a Raid—finish or no—it's not allowed to race again for three weeks.

The owners are also extremely careful with the horses. Preparing a horse to compete in a Raid is a lengthy and expensive process. Horses are confined to running on a sand track until they're four or five years old. From then until they're seven or eight, they compete in shorter races, slowly increasing their distance. But even when a horse has proven it can handle a full-fledged Raid, it's not immediately allowed to compete. It then has to make the transition to running on paved roads. Different surfaces call on different muscles, and if the owners are too hasty, the horse can easily break an ankle. Raid horses cost several thousand dollars. And with an average horse competing in eight Raids per year—barring injury—there are many more thousands in prize money to be won.

"With horses you have to get to know their manner to understand what they want," Nacho says. "If one is brave or timid, you'll take care of the horse in a different way. The training changes as we get to know the horse's nature. That's what excites me, every day learning something new about the horses."

Sometimes safeguards are not enough. Ninety kilometers is still a hell of a long way for a horse to run in a single morning. During the 2012 Raid season, roughly 1,600 horses competed. Five died. In 2013, prior to the Raid in Varela, four horses had died.

That weekend it looked like it might happen again.

Around the two-hour mark, the first group, including Ciriaco, arrives at the rest area, a huge, lush green field with a tiny pond that

looks more like Ireland than South America. Jockeys leap from their horses as members of their stud furiously tear off the saddle and hand it to the jockey, who sprints to a nearby scale. The jockey, holding the saddle, must weigh within a couple of kilograms of 85 kilograms, or about 185 pounds. (This is to make sure jockeys don't have an advantage by being too light, as well as to protect the horses against carrying too much weight. There are also jockey weigh-ins before and after a Raid.) The crew then leads the horse to a line of 14 barrels filled to the brim with water. Men dunk plastic buckets and metal pails into the barrels and in the same motion fling the water onto the horse, desperate to cool the beast and bring its heart rate to 65 beats per minute or less. Eventually, all 14 barrels will be emptied.

Some studs forgo the barrels and lead their horses straight into the pond. One jockey wades in himself, submerged to his waist in the water, dumping buckets of it over his horse. A member of another stud holds two soda-bottle-shaped blocks of ice against each side of his horse's neck. All this is accompanied by whistling from the jockeys and other stud members: The sound encourages the horses to urinate.

Veterinarians and their assistants roam through the maelstrom. When a stud is ready, the vets are called over. If the horse does not pass the pulse test, it is done for the day and the stud breaks out the IV, the pole and the bags of saline. In a weekend of surreal sights, two dozen horses meandering around a Technicolor-green field with IV poles extending from their backs ranks first. Fifty-one horses enter that weekend's Raid. Forty-seven depart the starting line. Twenty continue to the race's second half.

Mi Santa is not among them.

At the rest area, her odd tic becomes something more. She is now in plain distress, violently lashing her head back and stamping her right front foot. Nacho doesn't wait for the vets to tell him she's finished. He hooks her to the IV, not even wasting time with the pole but rather holding the bag himself. The entire stud—all eight men—gather around Mi Santa, each with a hand on her. Together, they walk her around, farther and farther from the pond and the rest of the crowd, hoping to give her space and privacy. A second IV is quickly inserted, another member of the stud holding the bag. The fluid doesn't help—not fast enough, anyway. Mi Santa begins to stagger. Then she goes down.

In the end only a dozen or so horses cross the finish line. Ciriaco pulls up lame somewhere along Ruta No. 14. The final result is even more unlikely than Mi Santa winning: a tie. More inconceivable still, a tie between two jockeys from the same town. Twenty-three-year-old Diego Prego and 54-year-old José Gussoni, both of Sarandí Grande, are neck and neck with three kilometers to go. The old friends decide to finish the race together and cross the line holding hands, arms raised high. They split the first-place prize money, and anyone who bet on either horse wins that particular round, though only half its pot.



Schwab

The finish line is situated just outside the ballroom. The crowd swells on both sides of the road. As soon as the men cross the line, they are mobbed—pulled down from their horses and showered with hugs and congratulatory shouts, then seized by TV and radio reporters. The horses are led around the block and sprayed with cold water from a gas-powered hose. The pressure is firehose strength. The horses don't even flinch.

Such a tie in El Raid is called a *puesta*. It is extremely rare. It's been years since the last. And no one can remember when, if ever, a *puesta* involved two jockeys from the same town. "You don't know how lucky you are to see this," Leo says in the midst of the surging, cheering crowd. It certainly would have been a magical, even providential end to this story, made even more meaningful by the difference in the riders' ages. Two men, one barely out of adolescence, the other on the back end of middle age, holding hands as they cross the finish line. What better metaphor for the current state of Uruguay, a country rich in history and tradition, trying to reconcile with the present and embrace the future. Yes, it would have been one hell of an ending, if that were where this story ended.

An hour later, with the crowds gone to the short track for the weekend's final races, the inflatable arch over the finish line carted away and Ruta No. 14 once more clear for milk trucks and other traffic, Mi Santa still lies on her side in the field—now empty except for a couple of lingering studs and their supporters. The shadows of the surrounding trees encroach.

When she first went down, Mi Santa tried to get back up, with the stud's help. Leo and a few of the other men crouched behind her and pushed, driving their shoulders into her as if she were a football blocking sled. The consensus was that she was cramping, in which case lying down would only make her tighten up and increase her discomfort. She stayed upright only a few moments, then fell again. After getting her up once more, for an even shorter time, the stud changed strategy. A few of the men lay on top of the horse to keep her down and help conserve her strength. Mi Santa resisted at

first, kicking so hard that she tossed two of the men into the air. Vets injected her with a painkiller. After a few minutes she settled down and just lay there.

Now, two of the men sit in the grass beside Mi Santa, stroking her for reassurance. They drink beer. The entire stud does. Nacho has driven his truck over and the cooler is steadily depleting.

Veterinarians confer to the side. It has been determined that the horse's stomach is the problem. This is likely due to dehydration and is not uncommon for horses during a Raid. They almost always feel better after the fluids and painkillers, which can take up to six hours to work. So it's still early. But the vets are concerned. If in the next hour or two Mi Santa can't get back on

down and spare her and everybody else the ordeal of surgery.

It's still too soon for any of this talk. And none of this has been proposed to Nacho. Not yet. But his worry is plainly visible. He gnaws his bottom lip, shakes his head dolefully, runs a hand through his short black hair, puts his hands on his hips and paces.

"Every horse is different," he says. "Mi Santa has responded well from the time we first started training her. That kind of horse always endears herself to a trainer or owner, because it's a good feeling to see her understand and improve. She has so many of the traits I like to see in a Raid horse. Sometimes a horse will get hurt early on and can't compete anymore. It always hurts when it's a horse you've developed a close relationship with."

"I thought the *yegua* could get herself right in there and place in one of the top positions," Maximiliano de Cunto says. "Winning a Raid is really complicated, so many factors...."

It is time for my photographer and me to leave. Neither of us has slept and we don't want to navigate the strange, sparsely lit highway in the dark on our four-hour drive. As we cross the field toward the car, we hear shouting and look back. Mi Santa has risen. The men drop their beers, bolt up from where they're sitting and rush to her side. Each places a hand on her, as if hoping to somehow confer a bit of their own vitality. She looks steady, walking in a circle. Several of the men back away and begin backslapping and cleaning up

the empty beers. It is a celebration, a victory, even this far from the finish line.

Then she falters and goes back down.

Later that night, back at my hotel room in Montevideo, I receive an e-mail from Leo. Mi Santa finally managed to stay up and walk to the trailer. She'll be taken to the hospital the next day for an X-ray. But first she'll attend the trophy ceremony in the Varela city square. The Monday after a Raid, all the studs show up for the trophy ceremony with their horses, even if they didn't finish.

"That way they show to everyone else that their horse is okay," Leo tells me. "It's a matter of pride."

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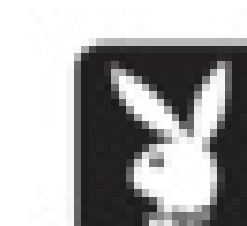
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her feet, surgery will have to be considered. However, the nearest veterinary hospital is four hours away, and to keep Mi Santa sufficiently sedated and comfortable for that long of a ride would be difficult. Surgery could be performed right here in the field, but that too is problematic.

"There are much better conditions at the hospital versus doing it in the field," says the eldest vet, Ruben Acosta Fernández. "The surgery is two to three hours. Could be a piece of dead intestine. We'd just cut it out and sew it together and close her up."

But if it's something more serious, something the vets are ill-equipped to treat outside of a hospital, they'd then have little recourse but to euthanize the horse. That's another option: Just put Mi Santa



KATE MARA

(continued from page 86)

Q8

PLAYBOY: Are you now the life of the party?

MARA: I'm okay at a party, but if I'm going out with a group of friends, I'd rather it be four of us than 10. Otherwise I'll wind up talking to just the two people next to me. I'm always much more at ease when there are fewer people. I wasn't a loner as a kid, but I'm 31 now and still like small groups rather than big crowds.

Q9

PLAYBOY: Many male actors admit that they were partly motivated to pursue careers in show business because of the astonishing-looking women who work in and around it. What about you?

MARA: I'll bet women don't say that. It's silly. Attractive people are everywhere. I was very focused on a career and still am. I was never boy crazy.

Q10

PLAYBOY: Would you cop to feeling slightly jealous over the fact that David Fincher directed you in the first two episodes of *House of Cards*, but he directed your sister in both *The Social Network* and *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, the latter of which got her an Oscar nomination?

MARA: We've never had any kind of competitive thing between us, thank God. We're really close. Oscars aren't everything, but I watch them and I'm not super-cynical about them. Would I love to earn an Oscar nomination someday? Of course. But we were all together when we learned Rooney had gotten the nomination, and we all celebrated together. We went to the Oscars together. She and I have auditioned for some of the same parts, and we've actually checked with each other, like, "What time is your audition?" because it would be just awkward to see each other there.

Q11

PLAYBOY: Has a fan ever asked for an autograph and looked surprised when they read the signature, thinking you were your sister?

MARA: As a redhead, I've been confused with other redheads like Amy Adams—but hey, I'll take that. She's amazing. I had someone come up to me for an autograph and say, "I loved you in *The Devil Wears Prada*," but no, that's not me either. I've signed autographs, and when I realized they thought I was someone else, I've actually called the other actor to tell them. Maybe I need to start asking who people think I am before I sign.

Q12

PLAYBOY: The opening episode of the second season of your TV series, *House of Cards*, caused shock waves when the intimate relationship between your journalist character and Kevin Spacey's character turned fatal. Shouldn't a character as

smart as Zoe Barnes, already suspicious that her boyfriend has murdered a U.S. congressman, have seen that he's capable of pretty much anything?

MARA: She would never have entertained getting into a personal relationship knowing it was going to get so dangerous or that he was 100 percent capable of murder. Even though I obviously knew what was going to happen this season, I was able to watch in a pretty objective way. Because the show is so well-made, it's easy to forget about the scenes I'm in and not in and just sort of watch it like a regular person would. That's a real testament, because usually I have to watch something I'm in a couple of times before I can start to appreciate it for what it is. But with *House of Cards*, it was easy to get caught up in it.

Q13

PLAYBOY: Please annihilate the silly rumor that they used a body double for your naked backside in that memorable scene in the first season.

MARA: Who would say that? I met David Fincher when my sister did *The Social Network*, so I knew him long before I ever read for him. When he said, "I really want you to play this role," he told me about the series and what was going to happen with the character. I fell in love with her because she's so ambitious and driven. She's attracted to power. Of course, having seen his films and knowing what I knew about *House of Cards*, I expected there might be a lot of nudity and edgy stuff required. But I trust David.

Q14

PLAYBOY: Were you ultimately surprised at the amount of nudity and sex scenes?

MARA: I'd read all the scripts way in advance, so nothing shocked me. It just happened, and it wasn't uncomfortable. From day two of working with Kevin, I found him just as playful as I am. He would definitely up my game. I tried to get him to laugh by wearing pasties with his face on them. Of course, because Kevin wants to win whatever the game is and because he always wins, he did not laugh. He waited until the director said "Cut" and then he laughed. Kevin has an amazing sense of humor, but he's also a great professional and he's really fucking good at it.

Q15

PLAYBOY: How does your family react to seeing you in nude and edgy movie and TV scenes?

MARA: They have a sense of humor about it that they didn't used to have. They were very upset when I was 19 and had a scene in *Nip/Tuck* that showed only my back but suggested nudity. I tried to explain that it's acting and part of the craft, and if it's important to the story and tastefully done, I will choose to do certain things. By the time *House of Cards* came along, my family had dealt with plenty of other difficult things to watch with my career and my sister's career.

Q16

PLAYBOY: You recently landed the role of Sue Storm in the *Fantastic Four* reboot. You've finished shooting a thriller called *Captive*, and you've just been in *Transcendence*, the directing debut of Wally Pfister, the cinematographer for Christopher Nolan's Batman movies and *Inception*. Any tales to tell?MARA: Wally is so talented and such an enthusiastic person. I loved working with him on *Transcendence*, playing someone who is anti-technology. I really hope he directs more movies. *Captive* is interesting too. I made it with David Oyelowo, who is a friend. It's based on the real story of a man in Atlanta who broke out of a courthouse jail, shot a number of people and took a single mother who was a meth addict hostage in her own apartment. It was intense and I probably wouldn't have made it with anyone but David. So it's been busy. I still have plenty of time for binge watching, though, given certain conditions.

Q17

PLAYBOY: Which are?

MARA: I try to work out six days a week, mostly doing the Bar Method, ballet-inspired classes mixed with Pilates. I have to run for an hour every day. If I put that time in, then I feel I can do whatever I want for the rest of the day, even if it's just watching movies or catching up on a TV show. I barely watch live TV now.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Are you addicted to working out?

MARA: No. It's not about being too thin or too fat or anything. It's not about weight. It's confidence. I'm a vegan, but that doesn't mean I get up and leave if I'm out to dinner with someone who orders a steak. My friends don't care about me not eating meat. Their biggest surprise is that I won't eat cheese anymore, and I don't blame them because cheese was definitely the hardest thing to give up.

Q19

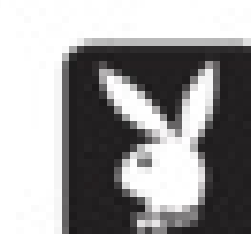
PLAYBOY: What's your biggest professional frustration?

MARA: I'm grateful for the opportunities I've won already, but there are certain aspects of me that I haven't played yet. I'd love to do a love story and I haven't. Doing a movie or TV show that centers on two people can be the most challenging for an actor. That's something I would love to do.

Q20

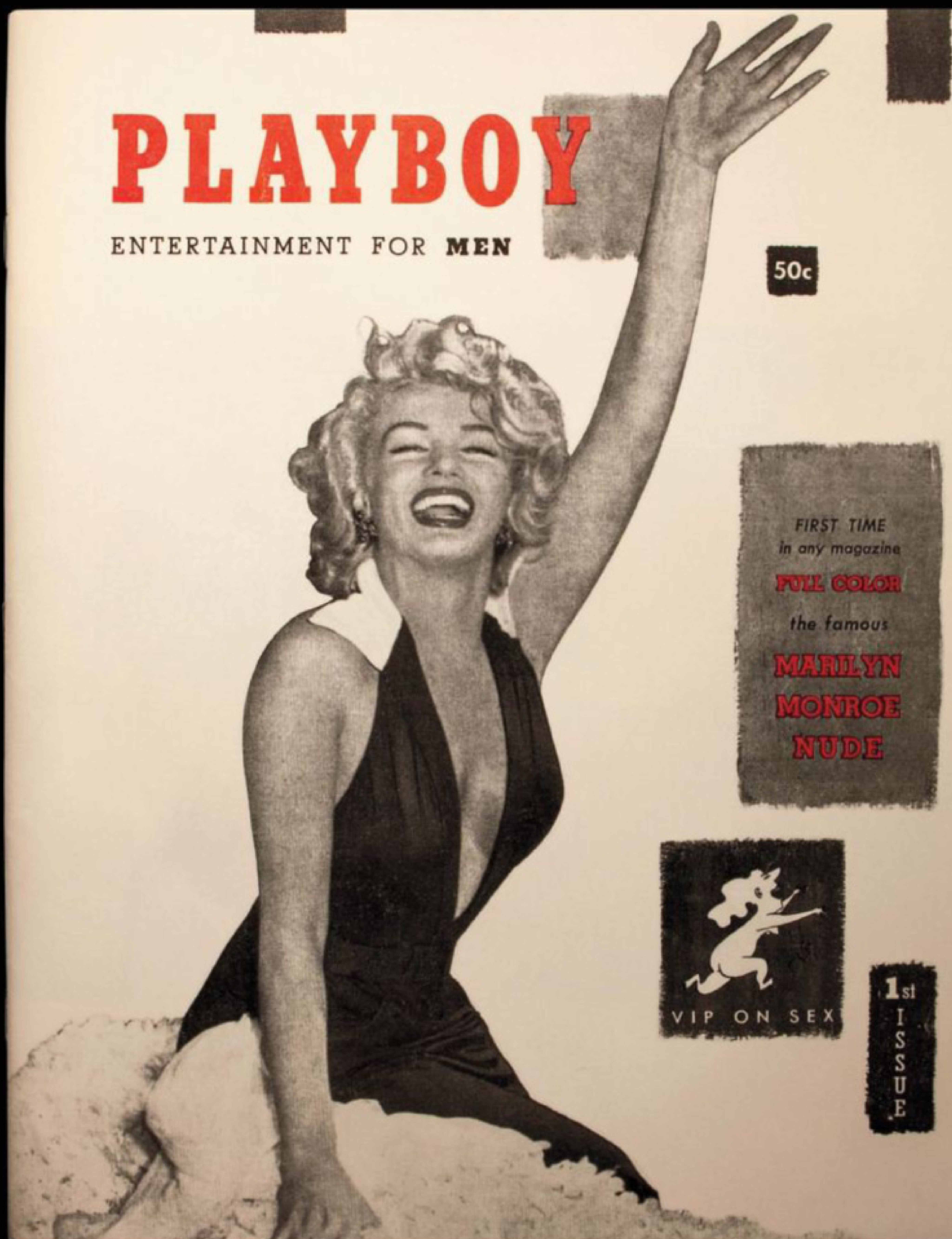
PLAYBOY: Sue Storm in *Fantastic Four* possesses the power of invisibility. You're photographed whenever you're in public, but if you could be invisible for 24 hours, what kinds of mischief would you get up to?

MARA: I feel I have that power already. I can go almost anywhere and not be recognized. I already do what I want to do and just live my life.

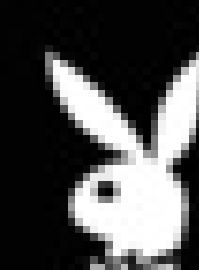


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FROM RUSSIA

(continued from page 56)

we all run of getting hit. The websites we visit every day—Chase, Visa, Amazon, eBay—can be infected with malware that will establish dominion over our password-“protected” data. Those with the know-how can pilfer a single mom’s life savings, gut a local gym owner’s capital, hit small businesses or go after bigger fish such as Sony or Home Depot.

One hit can have massive ramifications. As Target customers learned this past Christmas, even if your own machine is as secure as possible, your information can be compromised anyway. Between November and December last year, thieves hacked into Target’s system and stole up to 40 million credit and debit card numbers, as well as addresses and phone numbers of about 70 million customers. The hackers probably got in through Fazio Mechanical Services, a small business in Pittsburgh that provided refrigeration to the stores. According to analysts, the hackers appear to have used malware to infect Fazio’s computers and then moved into Target stores’ point-of-sale systems—the computers where customers

physically swipe their cards—and transmitted that information back to the mother ship. Typically criminals will wait months to use their loot, long after the media firestorm has died down and customers have dropped their guard and stopped monitoring their accounts. Hackers can also sell the data on the forums I saw with Kislitsin. Credit card numbers can be bought for about a dollar, which adds up when you sell data by the thousands or millions.

According to Symantec, an American security-research firm, cybercrime cost \$113 billion globally in 2013. The United States was hit hardest, losing \$38 billion. Every day more than 1 million people are victims of cybercrime—or 12 victims per second, nearly three times the global birthrate. That includes people whose private data you’d expect to be protected to the gills. Last spring Michelle Obama, Joe Biden, Jay Z, Hillary Clinton, Ashton Kutcher, even then FBI director Mueller (among many other high-profile victims) saw their credit card information, Social Security numbers and previous addresses posted online in one massive dump for the entire world to see. The website was registered to a .su (short for Soviet

Union) domain, leading experts to point to Russian handiwork.

This was no surprise: Russia is ground zero for cybercrime. Of the FBI’s 10 most-wanted cybercriminals, four are Slavs, one is a Swede and two are Pakistani. China has its fair share of cybercriminals too. The more we try to fortify our security systems, the quicker these hackers evolve to outwit us.

Since I’m new to cybercrime, Kislitsin is setting me up to pull off a heist as easily as possible. We’re looking for prewritten malware (the most skilled cybercriminals design their own, Kislitsin explains). Within 10 minutes we’ve found three kinds of Trojans for sale: SmokeBot, Andromeda and Citadel. Of the three, Kislitsin makes the strongest case for Citadel—at \$350, it’s inexpensive and perfect for pilfering from U.S. bank websites. (A quick tally yields that it would cost a newbie about \$3,300 to buy the necessary components to launch a cyberheist. “It is a business, so you have to put up some money to start,” Kislitsin explains.)

“In Russia we have a saying: cheap and reliable,” Kislitsin says with a grin. He clicks over to his anonymous chat service and fires off a buying inquiry.

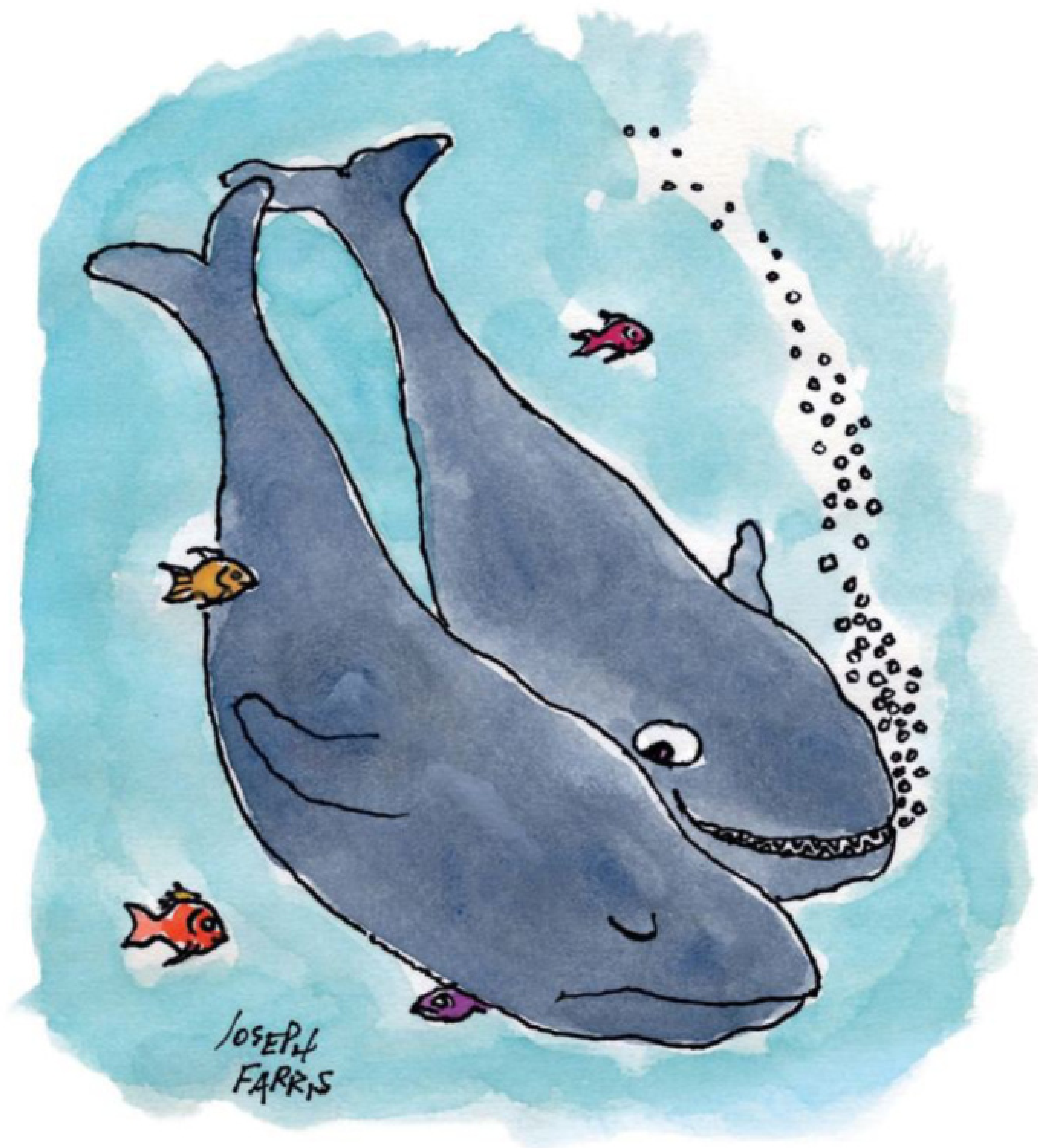
Then we wait.

●

In February 2013, three days after reporting \$1.1 million in fraudulent wire transactions, Daniel Crenshaw—the now 37-year-old founder and owner of Efficient Services Escrow Group in Huntington Beach, California—got served. Police officers stormed Efficient Services’ office, brandishing badges. They confiscated Crenshaw’s computers, kicked out his employees and changed the locks on the office doors. In December 2012 Crenshaw had worked with his bank to recover a mysterious wire that had sent \$432,215 to a bank in Moscow; then, over one week in late January 2013, two more wires totaling \$1.1 million were sent to a northern region of China near the Russian border. Efficient reported the fraud in accordance with state regulations. The California Department of Corporations gave the company three days to come up with the money. It couldn’t. The money was gone, so the police came in. (When an escrow company reports a fraudulent wire transfer in California, the law gives it three days to recover the funds, whereupon the state is mandated to take possession of the company.)

The firm that Crenshaw and his older brother, Rob, 39, had started in 2009 had been on its way to becoming one of the biggest escrow outfits in southern California. They’d just opened a second office and were hiring new employees. Suddenly everything was gone—the Crenshaws went from getting a cushy salary to no paycheck. They laid off their staff, and they owed money to their clients that they couldn’t return.

The reputational damage from a cyber-attack alone is jarring—money has mysteriously disappeared from a company. The Crenshaws’ competitors were beginning to whisper, saying they’d always known the brothers were shady. Although criminal charges were never filed, that didn’t make



“Come on, baby, haven’t you heard? We’re in danger of becoming extinct!”

it better. "We were getting threats from our clients, from the Department of Corporations, from the bank," Daniel recalls. "You don't know how to defend yourself. You didn't do anything wrong. Overnight you've lost a company that you spent five years building." He says he is being forced to walk away from the real estate industry. "Even when all the dust settles, it still doesn't go away. Now they want to blackball us from the industry." His brother's membership in the California Escrow Association has already been revoked. Daniel's hearing with the association is pending. "Until the public knows that we had no doing in this matter, our names will not be cleared," he says.

Online bank theft often targets American small businesses. They are more lucrative than individual accounts because they tend to have fatter balances, and they are checked less often. Small businesses also have laxer online security than big firms do. (That's why hackers could get into Target through Fazio Mechanical Services in Pittsburgh.) And although the U.S. government insures personal accounts, small businesses with commercial accounts have no government guarantees to recover stolen funds—as the Crenshaws learned, if a business gets hit, the cost is its to bear.

Losses from cybercrime can be staggering. The U.S. Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), a government initiative for victims of cybercrime, received 289,874 complaints in 2012, an 8.3 percent increase from 2011. And that includes only individuals who reported some kind of loss. Many people who get hacked never go public. They are frequently targeted while looking at porn: A common scam involves infecting a victim's computer with malware that installs another program, called Ransomware, which locks the computer and flashes a warning that the owner has violated U.S. federal law. The scam goes further, declaring that the user's IP address was used to visit child-pornography sites. It then instructs victims to pay a fine to the U.S. Department of Justice through prepaid money card services in order to regain control of their machine. Most people pay.

"The first trap that many infected users fall into is thinking that this is personal in some way," says Brian Krebs, a journalist specializing in cybercrime investigations who blogs at KrebsOnSecurity.com. "You're not some unique snowflake that the bad guys want to attack. Unless you're some big juicy target, most of these attacks are opportunistic. Your machine can be monetized a hundred ways from Sunday."

It took Mark Patterson more than three years to recover from the hit. Over a six-day period in 2009, a Zeus Trojan snared \$588,000 from his Maine-based company, Patco Construction, by infecting the business's work computers. The hackers tapped into both the company's account and its line of credit. "We're going to get our money back, right?" Patterson said when he called the bank. But the bank rep was stumped: "We don't even know what's going on." Within 24 hours the bank managed to halt about \$200,000 of the money, recovering funds that had been moved to the first

money-mule account. But the rest was gone.

Patterson sued the bank—and lost. All the while, the bank continued to charge Patterson interest, which would total about another \$100,000 over the course of his legal ordeal. In 2012 an appeals court overturned the decision; the bank settled, but the damage had been done. By then Patterson had spent hundreds of thousands in legal fees—none of which was reimbursed. He had been so focused on the case that new business opportunities had slipped away. "I guess you can feel good about winning, but not really winning," Patterson says. "There are still people losing hundreds of thousands of dollars, continually."

Much of that money is winding up in Russia, the birthplace of cybercrime. With the collapse of the USSR, well-educated Russian programmers, lacking job opportunities, began to look for ways to monetize the internet. They excelled at spamming and developing networks of infected computers under the control of one command center, which would drive internet traffic to paid porn sites. That in turn spawned the fake credit card industry. Soon Russian hackers had developed all the moving parts they needed to graduate to bank heists. Since the early 2000s Russians have produced the most effective banking Trojans, specifically targeting America and Western Europe. Today Russia is home to the best hackers and the most banking hits.

Russia's refusal to cooperate with the U.S. government to arrest its own citizens has created a cybercrime safe haven. Usually only hackers who attack Russian banks serve time. The only way to stop the others is to arrest them if they step on European or American soil. Last July the FBI indicted four Russians and a Ukrainian for stealing more than 160 million credit card numbers from major U.S. companies, including Visa, Discover, NASDAQ, 7-Eleven and JetBlue. They stole \$300 million in total—one of the largest cyberheists in history. Two of the culprits were arrested in the Netherlands and one of them was extradited to the U.S., but three of the masterminds are still at large.

Since the government isn't cracking down on them, Russians can do pretty much anything with the money they make. And when money comes easy, it's no surprise that those with gaudy streaks flaunt it. Group-IB showed me a profile on vKconnect, the Russian version of Facebook, of a 19-year-old kid who had stolen millions from U.S. point-of-sale registers—the same kind of heist that hit Target. His photos feature him wearing thick bedazzled chains and making gang signs with his friends.

Invincibility on Russian soil led one hacker, VorVZakone, to make a video of his life as a well-to-do cybercriminal and upload it to YouTube. "I decided to meet you, let's say remotely," the brick of a man in a black trench coat and wraparound shades boasts to the camera. "Now you will see how I live." He calls himself Seroga and takes viewers on a tour of his gated community. Seroga and Oleg, a younger guy with an aquiline nose and highlighted blond hair pulled back with a headband,



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act like guests on a bootleg episode of *MTV Cribs*. After a drive through their hood, the two jump out and examine Seroga's second car, a white Hyundai Solaris, as birds chirp placidly in the background. The camera follows him to his house and into a redbrick foyer, where he shows off a walkie-talkie by calling his cleaning lady on the other end. The residence itself is a typical nouveau riche affair. "This is my setup," Seroga says, pointing to an open laptop and a desktop facing two white leather couches along the walls. "You don't need anything more," Oleg chimes in. At the end of the video, Seroga sits down alone in his kitchen to a plate of caviar sandwiches his housekeeper has prepared.

The video caused a stir on underground forums. Hackers mocked Seroga, defaming him as a phony, a police plant or just an idiot who wasn't taking his security seriously. In September 2012, VorVZakone posted a battle summons called Project Blitzkrieg, trying to recruit other hackers to coordinate mass attacks on 30 U.S. banks before they upped security measures, claiming he had been developing the Trojan since 2008 and had already successfully stolen \$5 million. The announcement prompted security companies to issue warnings of an

impending attack. McAfee Labs found that VorVZakone's touted pilot Trojan had already infected more than 80 victims across the United States. He was never caught.

While the FBI has made headway in busting cybercrime rings in recent years, U.S. banks and businesses are deeply resistant to admitting they've been hit for fear of damaging their reputations. They increasingly rely on private companies such as Group-IB that work under nondisclosure agreements to track down their stolen funds.

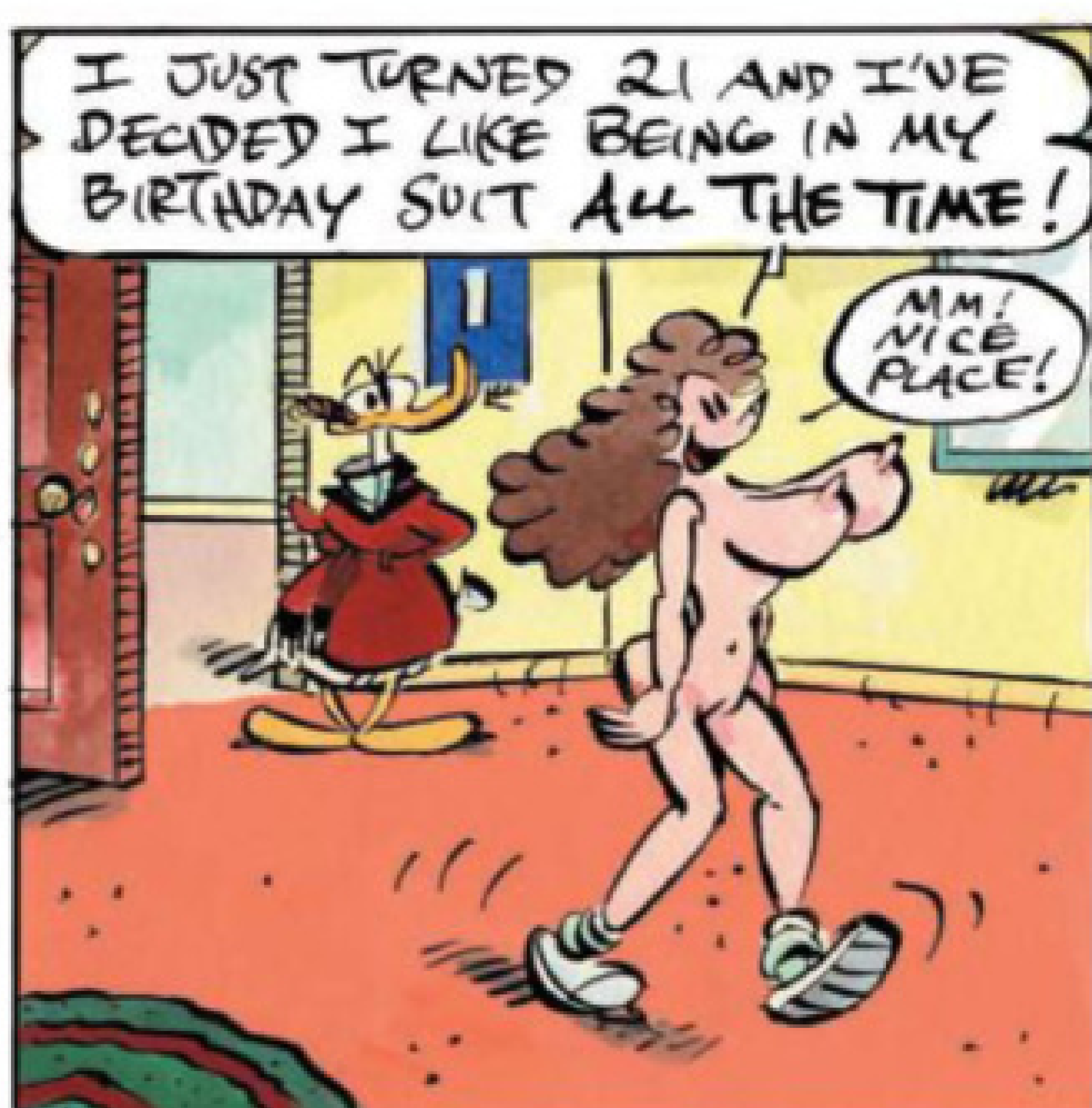
Founded in 2003 by several college kids at Russia's equivalent of MIT, Group-IB is housed in a gated business compound on the northeast edge of central Moscow. Inside the squat, grimly utilitarian building is a labyrinth of corridors divided by key-coded doors. In this hushed atmosphere, young employees peer fixedly at their double flatscreen monitors, sipping from steaming mugs. They work on behalf of various banks and internet empires, including Microsoft, tracking down cybercriminals and trying to hack into the companies' servers to test their security systems.

I'm sitting behind Dmitry Volkov's desk. Tall and taciturn with wavy brown

hair, the 29-year-old head of Group-IB's cybercrime-investigation team flicks through the files of criminals it has tracked down. We pause on Ivan. On his vKconnect profile, Ivan (Volkov asked that I withhold Ivan's real name), who lists his age as 24, has the kind of blond bowl cut, button nose and wide-set blue eyes found on Soviet-era propaganda posters beseeching comrades to fell hay for the motherland. He's married to a buxom, blue-eyed blonde with a round face and pouty lips. She's 23. They have a young son.

A few years ago, Volkov says, Ivan began to visit Russian-language hacking forums. He started to write injects—software programs that transfer money from a specific bank—which he advertised and sold in the online netherworld for between \$200 and \$500. Soon hackers began posting endorsements: Ivan delivered what he promised. Then, around 2011, Ivan decided to perpetrate his own heist. He bought prewritten malware called SpyEye to hit Bank of America. He and a partner used Ivan's own injects and contracted someone to hack a server to spread the Trojan. They then transferred the cash and hired a money-mule service to pull it out of the accounts. In 2012 they hit Italian and

Dirty Duck[®] by Bobby London



German banks. Last year Ivan hit a Russian bank and grabbed at least \$2 million. "If he wants to make a million, he needs to steal two," Volkov explains, "because he gives 50 percent of the money to mules."

Ivan lives in a provincial city hours outside Moscow. Russia's provinces are notoriously poor, their capitals filled with concrete-slab apartment blocks. Jobs are scarce, and drug and alcohol abuse runs rampant. Volkov hails from a similarly neglected far-flung city in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, an underpopulated peninsula in Russia's far east where tundra winds beat down on the city. When Volkov was a kid, his parents enrolled him in programming classes where he and his friends would send one another computer viruses as practical jokes. He ended up at the best technical university in Moscow, where programmers make three times as much as those in the provinces.

For those who remain behind, it's not hard to understand the temptation to go rogue. The guys at Group-IB could easily have been on the other side of the coin. There's a universal appeal to hacking, finding errors in codes and gaps in security and proving your worth.

Group-IB knows Ivan is working on a new project, trying to write his own malware, but whom he intends to target, they can't tell. For now, Volkov tells me, Ivan is still at large. Volkov isn't sure Ivan will actually serve time if he's caught. There are many ways to avoid sentencing in Russia's corrupt legal system—even if you steal from Russians. For crimes that target the U.S., the arrest rate is nonexistent. U.S. and Russian authorities rarely work together on cybersecurity cases, and officials from Russia's Federal Security Service, the Russian FBI, tend to look the other way when the victims are abroad. Moscow's decision to grant Edward Snowden temporary asylum when he is wanted by the U.S. for leaking National Security Agency surveillance programs is unlikely to make cooperation smoother.

Kislitsin published his first article in *Hacker* at the age of 15. It was about how to get multiple uses off a single internet credit scratch card, which back then was used to top up credit and log in to the internet. (He admits he used it a few times before notifying the company of the security glitch. "It was just to make sure it worked," he tells me coyly.) "There are lots of poor people in Russia, and some of these poor people still have access to a good education. If a smart student sees that he can write software and each copy would cost \$50,000, wouldn't he do this?" Kislitsin says.

"This well-educated guy might grow up in an intelligent family in which his parents taught him it is bad to steal money or things. Psychologically, he's not ready for stealing money," Kislitsin continues, "but on the other hand, he can see that many people in Russia steal from their own country, from the government budget, and feel great. So he might think, Okay, what if I write this piece of malware? I'm not even stealing anything. I'm just a software developer, and psychologically it's okay." That's

exactly how Ivan started. But the more money they make, the more sophisticated the heists get.

Unlike his colleague, Volkov has no sympathy for the hackers he's employed to catch. He refers to them with unmasked disdain as the "golden youth." "These people are for some reason convinced they are not stealing from actual people but from bad people or from the government, like Robin Hood," Volkov says, shaking his head. "I've never seen anyone on comments say, 'This is a small business. Let's not steal from it.' If there's money, they'll take it."

•

On a Thursday morning in March 2010, Ken Hollomon, 49, an IT consultant in Los Angeles, got the call. His longtime friend Michelle Marsico was frantic—the bank account of her recently founded escrow company was missing \$450,000. Over three days, 26 wire transfers had gone out across the U.S. Hollomon rushed to the office. "It was like the beginning of a nightmare, when you know it's going to be a nightmare and you're trying to stop it," he says.

The bank was unresponsive, telling Marsico it could no longer communicate with her without a lawyer present. The police department gave her a receipt with a case number. "I'm so sorry," was all the officer said. Eventually, the Secret Service called Marsico. After discussing the situation, she asked for her case number so she could follow up.

"This happens so much we would run out of numbers, so there's no case number," the agent told her.

Marsico was incredulous. She had never expected anything like this to happen to her; she had barely heard of cases like this. Someone had been through her accounts and taken everything—she didn't have the money to keep running the business. It

took all her strength just to get out of bed every day. "It feels like you've been raped; you don't want to broadcast how that feels. You feel like you've done something wrong, like you're a bad person, like you weren't responsible enough. All this stuff goes through your head, like I shouldn't own my own business if I can't handle this. I totally ripped myself a new one," she says. "My whole livelihood was taken away, and I had nobody to help me. All the government agencies were just.... I felt like nobody cared. Here I am, a taxpayer, an American citizen, working my butt off to make it, and there was nobody on my side. I was alone, and that was the most alone I've felt in my life."

Marsico and Hollomon decided to take matters into their own hands. From the names on the fraudulent wire statements the bank provided, they began to track down the mules, plugging the names into Facebook and LinkedIn. Most of the people they found were Americans who'd responded to employment ads online. Most didn't realize they were acting as money mules in a global mafia heist; they thought they had gotten a good deal doing honest work for a company overseas. "A lot of them were decent people," Hollomon says. "Some of them got out of college and didn't have any money. Some of them had just lost their jobs. They were Americans hurting for money."

On their own, Hollomon and Marsico were able to track down \$78,000 of the money. Then things got weirder. When Marsico was talking to her bank's IT expert, he asked her whether she had ever tried to access her bank account remotely. "From home?" she asked. "No, from Glendale," the rep said. Hollomon knew Marsico would never have logged on from Glendale, California—she didn't even log



"You know I love you. Look, I even have a guy guarding your clothes!"

on from her house. So Hollomon started hunting in online forums and soon learned that Glendale was a well-known hacker haven, right in their own backyard. He says he walked into a Glendale bar and ran into a kid who told him, "Yeah, I work for these people." Oh my God, Hollomon thought, I have to get out of here real quick.

"I just wanted to see if the addresses of the people we'd found were true, and they were," he explains. "These hackers aren't scary. They aren't thugs. They're just kids." In 2012 Marsico settled with her bank. It was a big payout that brought her company back from the abyss. Her settlement was a precedent for the industry: Since the wire transfers were unusual—to foreign countries Marsico had never sent money to before, in sums she didn't normally transfer—the bank took responsibility for allowing the funds to go through without sending up a red flag. But Marsico had lost two years of her life just fighting to survive. Since then, Hollomon has been contacted by other small businesses with the same problem. "They're trying to protect themselves, but they're trying to conduct business with these tiny IT budgets. It's really difficult," he says.

One of the most daring ATM heists happened last February. Two coordinated strikes involving people in 27 countries netted \$45 million from thousands of ATMs around the world. Hackers targeted two Middle Eastern banks, raising the withdrawal limits and increasing the balances on prepaid MasterCard debit cards issued by Bank of Muscat of Oman and National Bank of Ras Al Khaimah PSC of the United Arab Emirates. Money mules then strolled through cities across the world, simultaneously draining ATMs.

In New York City alone, the thieves hit 2,904 ATMs over 10 hours using a single Bank of Muscat account number. Sauntering around Manhattan, hitting ATMs and stuffing the money into backpacks, they withdrew \$2.4 million. In May prosecutors indicted eight men of Dominican origin living in Yonkers, New York. But they were just the cogs of the operation; their job was to withdraw stolen funds and transfer them to the mastermind's account for a

commission. (This was the riskiest part of the heist because it happened on U.S. soil and ATMs are under camera surveillance.) While money mules are frequently caught, the real kingpins remain free. The brains behind the Yonkers crew operation remain unknown, but according to prosecutors, one of the arrested men sent an e-mail to "support@wmirk.ru," an address "associated with an organization based in St. Petersburg, Russia that specializes in laundering the proceeds of criminal activity."

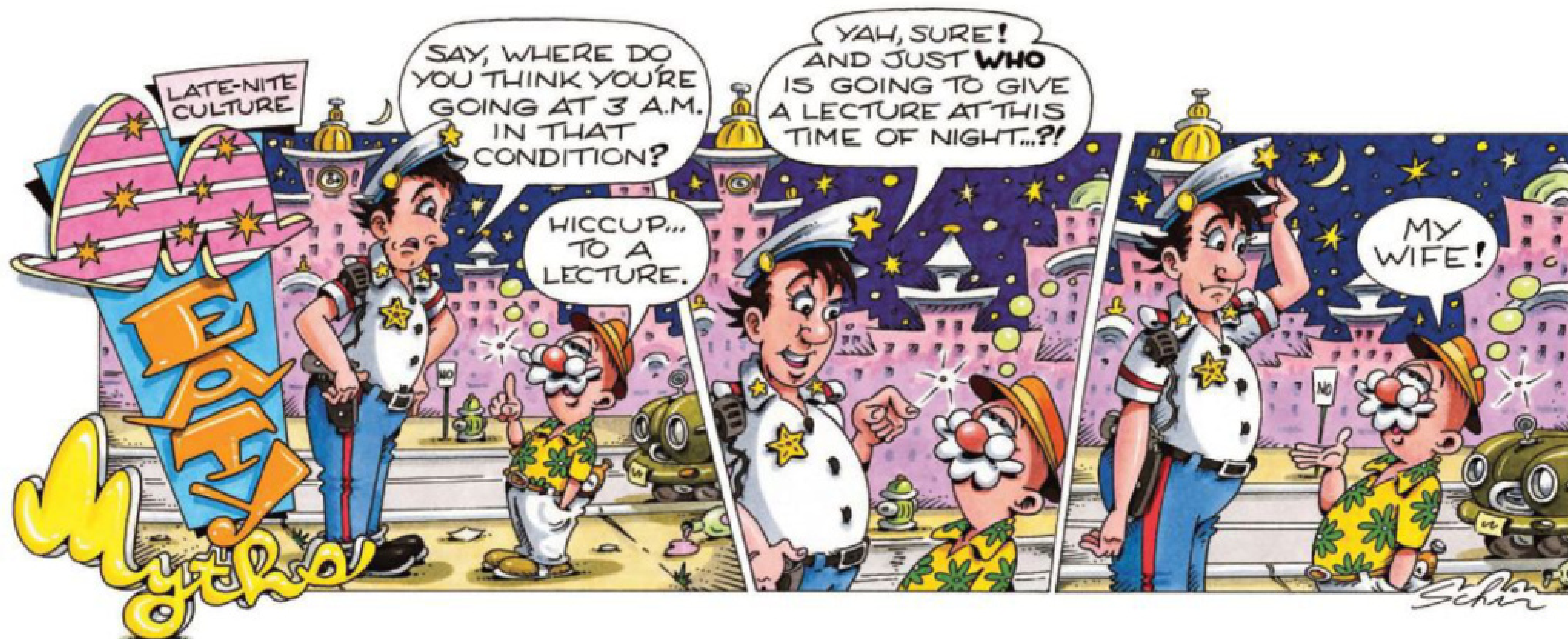
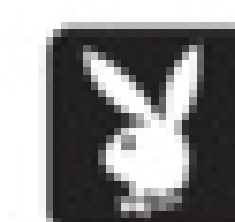
The Yonkers crew seemed as if they couldn't believe their own luck. After the heist, the perpetrators took a selfie: Sitting in a car, two men in their early 20s in black jackets pull the universal *boo-yah* face, dimpling their still-baby-fat cheeks while pointing to four thick stacks of cash between them. They purchased Rolex Oyster Perpetual Datejust watches, a Mercedes SUV and a Porsche Panamera. They stacked cash on top of Coors Light cans and took pictures—remorse seemed lacking. At one point they deposited nearly \$150,000, in the form of 7,491 \$20 bills, at a bank branch in Miami. One of the two in the selfie had listed Domino's as his place of employment on his passport application. Then they got busted—surveillance footage from the heist shows one of the mules wearing a Domino's hat.

A week after our attempts to buy the Trojan in the Japanese restaurant, Kislitsin e-mails me that he has heard back from two of the three sellers. The guy offering the Citadel Trojan upped his price for technical reasons—now, for about a grand, he's selling a whole kit that includes multiple components for a cyberheist that would allow users to manage and control their own botnet. Kislitsin bargains the price down 200 bucks and they have a deal. The seller gives Kislitsin his number for Web-Money, a service that doesn't require bank accounts—you can deposit funds by using money orders, wire transfers or exchange offices and prepaid cards. "I was supposed to pay him and never did," Kislitsin writes me. We could have made a fortune.

Even while online banking struggles to keep up, new banking methods—from smartphones to tablet apps—are creating new battlegrounds for the same war. Symantec estimates half of smartphone users sleep with their phones within arm's reach. Half of them also use no security precautions on their phone—no passwords, no security software, no backup files. Forty percent of smartphone and tablet users have experienced mobile cybercrime in the past year, and nearly 60 percent of users don't even know security for smartphones and tablets exists.

Yet even the most secure are vulnerable. In March 2012 NASA disclosed it had been hacked 13 times. In one go, hackers had stolen 150 user credentials that could be used to gain unauthorized access to NASA systems. That same month the Department of Homeland Security warned of a cyber-intrusion campaign on American gas pipelines that had been in the works since 2011. In July 2012 the NSA director said there had been a 17-fold increase in cyber incidents at U.S. infrastructure companies in the previous three years. In January of last year, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post* and Bloomberg News revealed they had been the victims of persistent cyberattacks, possibly originating in China. The following month the Department of Energy was hit; 14 computer servers and 20 workstations were penetrated, affecting hundreds of employees and compromising their personal information. In May 2013 the U.S. government revealed that the country's electrical grid is under near constant attack from multiple unknown entities.

As I look over copies of the logs Kislitsin sent of our attempts to buy malware and Ivan's cyberforum postings that Volkov shared with me in Moscow, I realize the user name is the same on all of them. Ivan is not just somewhere out there in Russia's vast hinterlands, working on a new plan: He's selling all the components for others to do it too. One of them could be me. One of them could be your Domino's delivery guy. And you'll never see us coming.

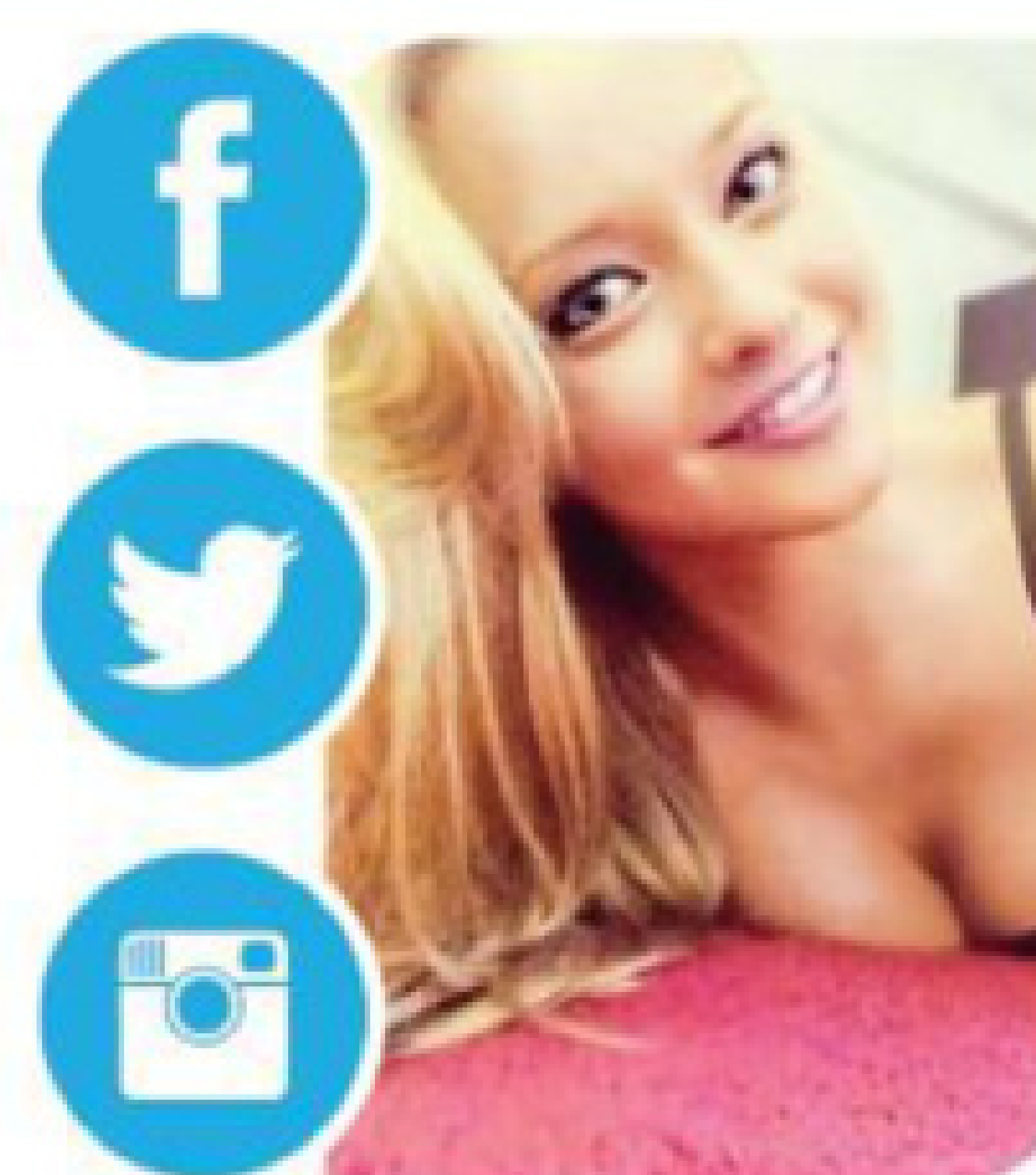


BUMP 'N' GRIND

This is Miss June 2010 Katie Vernola as you may remember her: beautiful, well-groomed, camera-ready. But in her other life as an off-road UTV (utility task vehicle) racer she's often covered in dirt. "It usually takes me two showers to get all cleaned up from the muddy track," she says. Part of the Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series, she zooms around at 75 mph in the slop, catching about 12 feet of air off the jumps, and rubs against other racers around a winding course. "I modeled my ass off to save enough money to buy my Polaris RZR XP 900," she says. "Once I had the opportunity to drive one of these bad boys it sparked a fire in me to do whatever I could to race. The feeling I get in it is like an O."

GOING DUTCH

• The very altruistic Miss October 2011 Amanda Cerny was named chairwoman of Play Foundation. Founded by electric-music management company Dirty Dutch, the charity uses music to help youths grow creatively.



Social Shutterfly

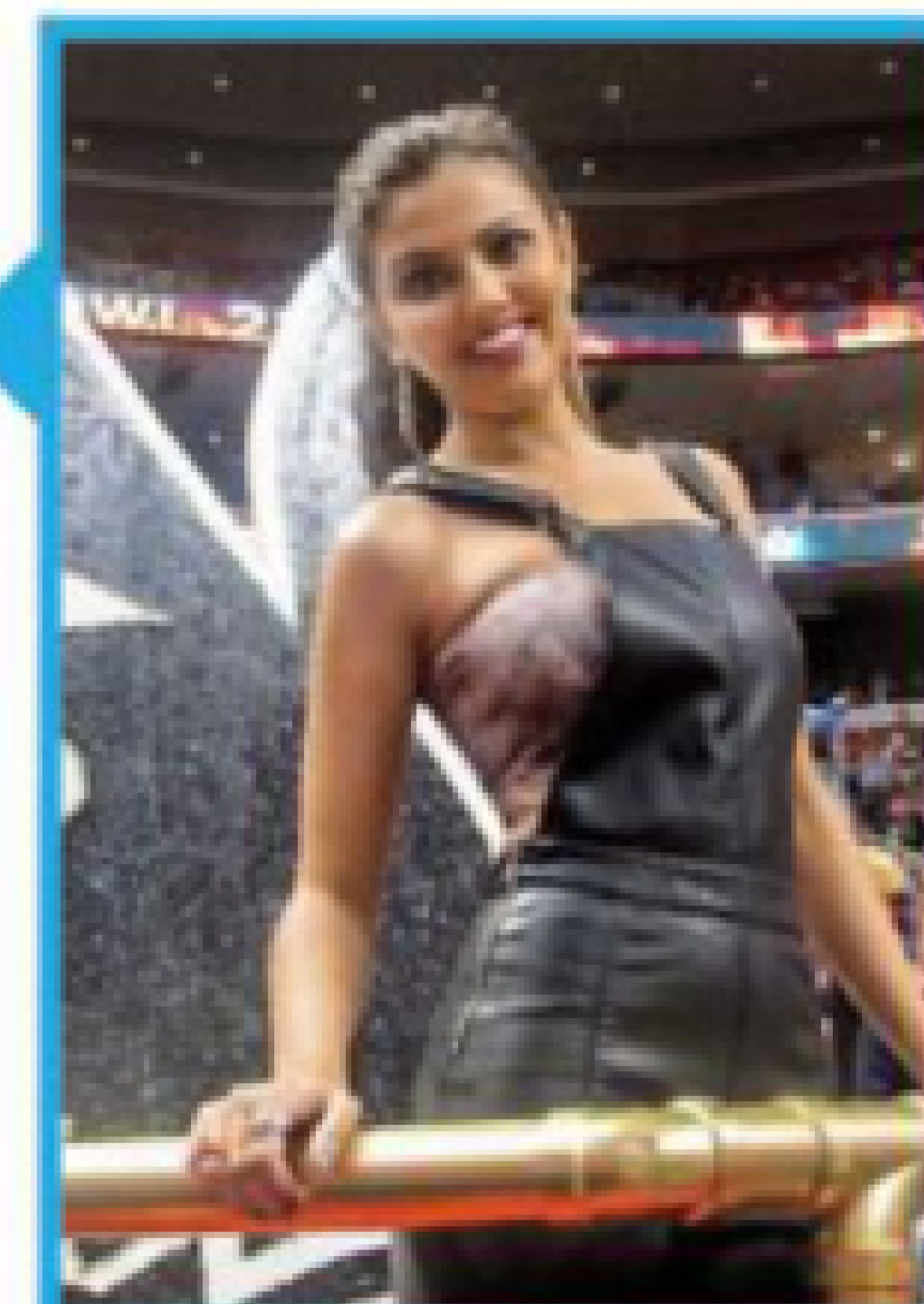
@MissAshley Hobbs, our Miss December 2010, shows off the goods. We are, of course, speaking of her enchanting eyes.

Girl Talk

■ Miss January 2010 **Jaime Faith Edmondson** is engaged to her longtime boyfriend, Tampa Bay Rays third baseman Evan Longoria. The couple has a one-year-old daughter and is planning a January 2016 wedding.

■ Philadelphia native **Val Keil**, Miss August 2013, recently returned home and traded her Bunny ears for wings. She was a special guest at the local buffalo-chicken-wing-eating competition.

■ Commerce Casino held a Playboy Poker Tournament, hosted by Playmates **Marketa Janska** and **Irina Voronina**, during the L.A. Poker Classic. The big winner was a shark by the name of Adam Weinraub.



Shanna's Ex Factor

Miss December 2001 Shanna Moakler will be featured on the new season of VH1's *Hollywood Exes*. Shanna has had her share of high-profile relationships: She was once engaged to boxer Oscar De La Hoya and married to Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker. "I've been single for a while," she says. "It's working out. I think I'm the one."



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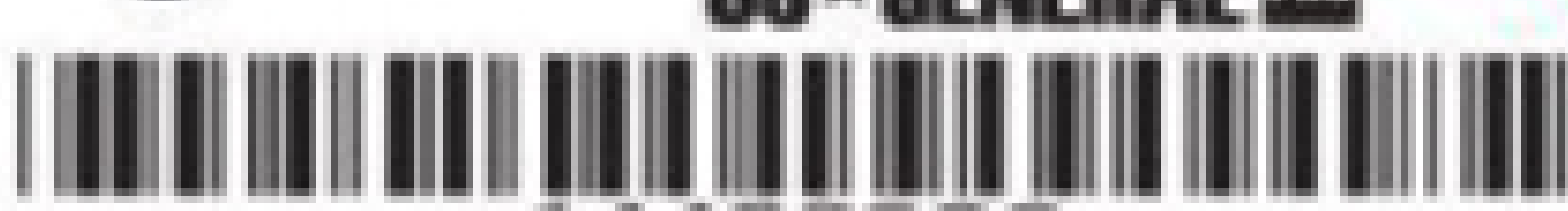
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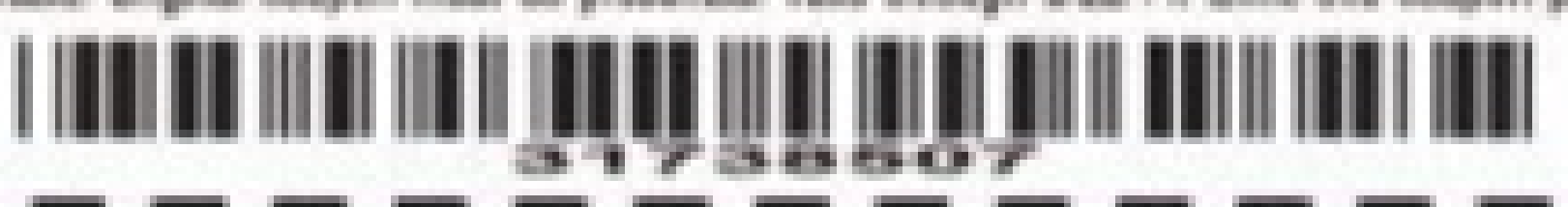
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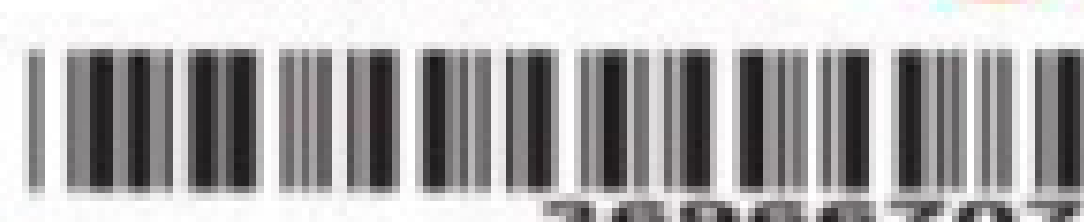
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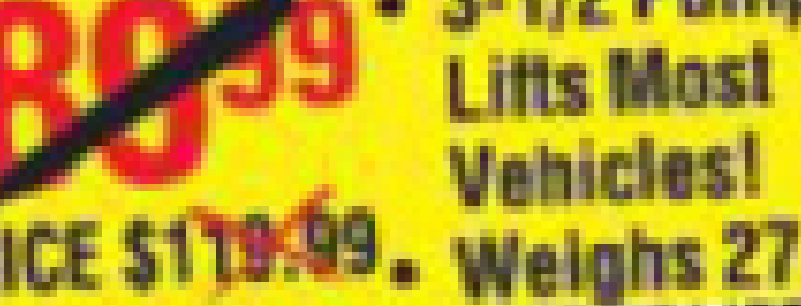
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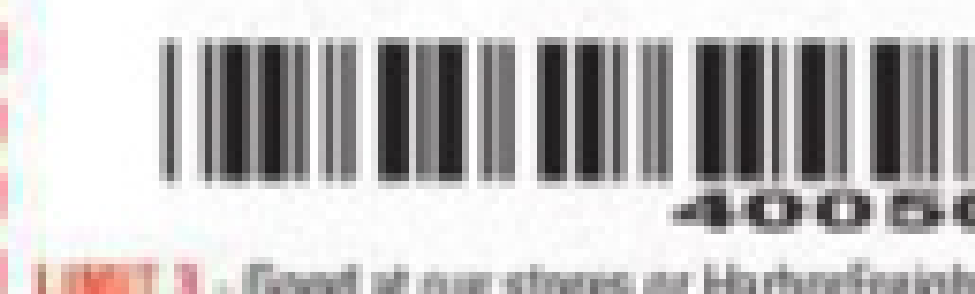
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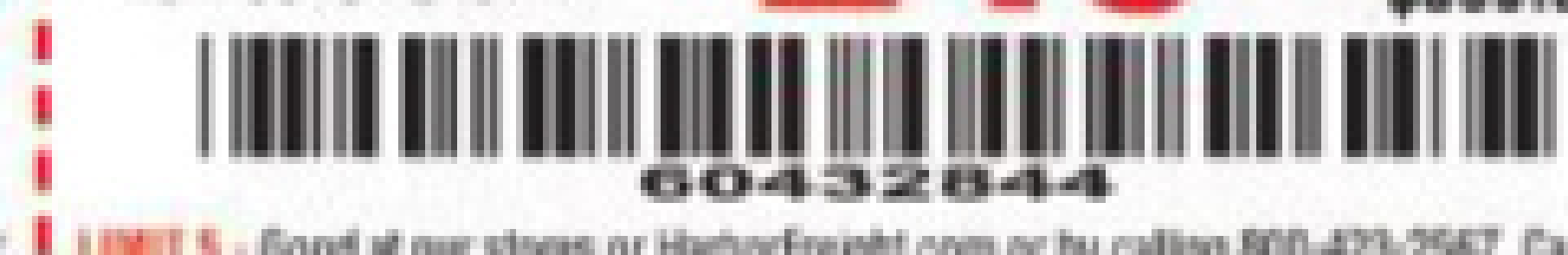
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TAKE TWO—JONAH HILL HAS TRANSFORMED INTO AN ACTOR WORTHY OF LEADING-MAN STATUS. IN A *PLAYBOY* INTERVIEW WITH **DAVID HOCHMAN**, THE TWO-TIME OSCAR NOMINEE CHATS ABOUT THIS SUMMER'S *21 JUMP STREET* SEQUEL, JOINING FORCES AGAIN WITH LEONARDO DICAPRIO AND WHAT HE STOLE FROM THE *WOLF OF WALL STREET* SET. (HINT: IT'S A PROSTHETIC.)

MOD MEN—IT'S TIME TO UPDATE YOUR DIGS ACCORDING TO THE NEW RULES OF MASCULINE STYLE. TO HELP, WE TURNED TO THE NATION'S TOP ARCHITECTURE FIRMS, INCLUDING **XTEN** AND **BATES MASI**, FOR EXAMPLES OF THE ULTIMATE MODERN BACHELOR PAD. THE FIRST RULE? DITCH THE BLACK LEATHER.

LET HIM EXPLAIN—STAND-UP COMIC **KEVIN HART** TAKES A BREATH FROM BREAKING BOX OFFICE RECORDS FOR A HILARIOUS 20Q WITH **ERIC SPITZNAGEL**, IN WHICH HART DISCUSSES LIFE AS A HAPPILY DIVORCED BACHELOR, IMITATING JAY Z AND WHAT IT'S LIKE BEING A FIVE-FOOT-FOUR SEX SYMBOL.

CITY OF CHAMPIONS—HOW DID THE BOSTON RED SOX, BURDENED BY MORE THAN 80 YEARS OF LOSS, TURN AROUND TO WIN THREE CHAMPIONSHIPS IN LESS THAN A DECADE? **KEVIN COOK** LOOKS BACK ON THE GREATEST COMEBACK STORY IN SPORTS HISTORY. **PETE ROSE, MIKE VACCARO, CONAN O'BRIEN, JONNY GOMES, DENIS LEARY** AND OTHERS REGALE US WITH THEIR FAVORITE—AND MOST HEART-POUNDING—MEMORIES.

DANCE, DANCE, REVOLUTION—SKRILLEX, EDM AND MUSIC FESTS SUCH AS LAS VEGAS'S ELECTRIC DAISY HAVE REINVENTED THE RAVE SCENE AS BROAD-DAYLIGHT BACCHANALIA. BUT IN ABANDONED WAREHOUSES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AN UNDERGROUND CIRCUIT OF ALL-NIGHT PARTIES FUELED BY DRUGS AND SEX SURVIVES. **RACHEL R. WHITE** JOINS A NEW GENERATION OF CLUB KIDS UNDER THE LASER LIGHTS.

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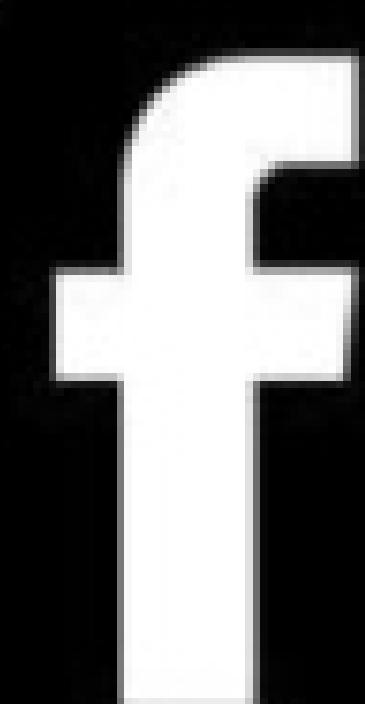
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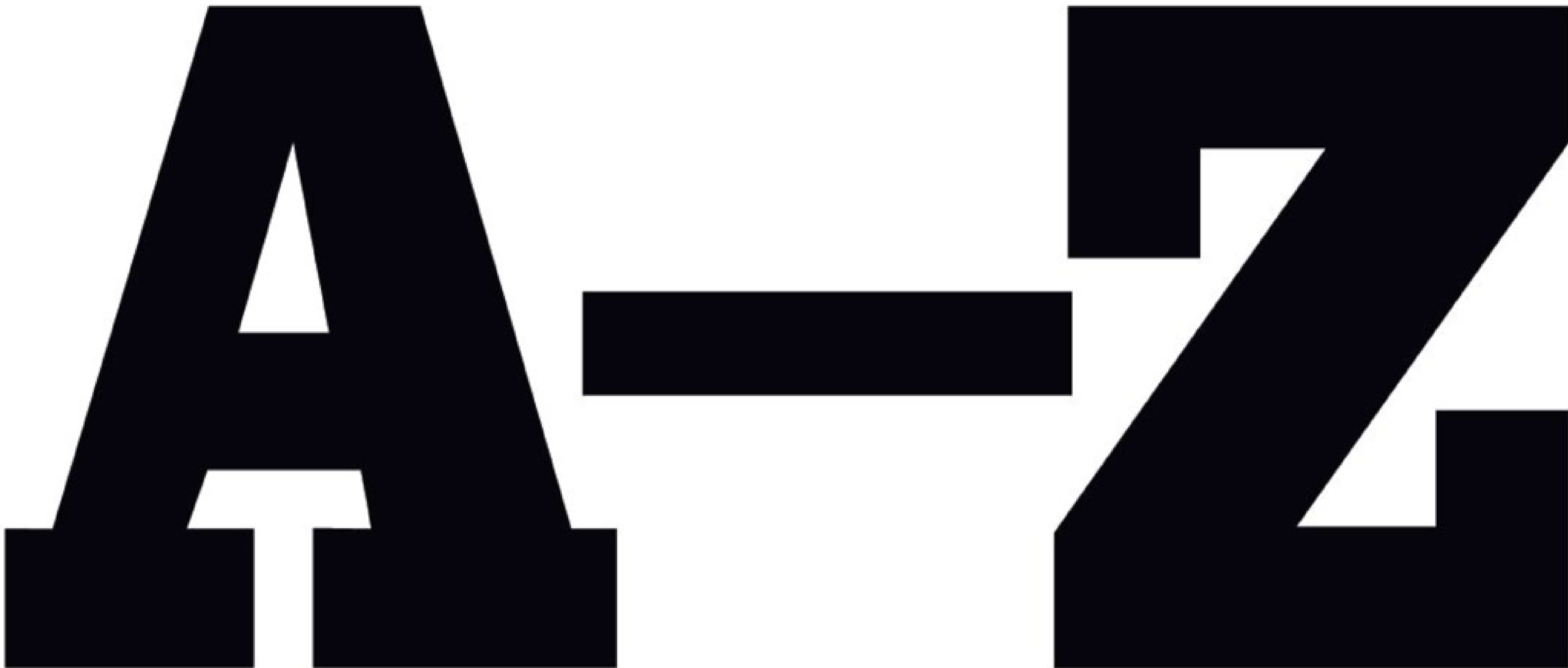
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PLAYBOY was founded at a moment when social, cultural and economic change was transforming every aspect of American life. And from the start, the magazine stepped right into the fray as an advocate for radical liberation from the lamely prevailing norms of squaredom and prudery. PLAYBOY encouraged men and women alike to think, speak, consume, produce and fuck in new and ever more exciting ways. It functioned as both record and instrument of a massive moral transformation, and in doing so, it became an indispensable part of our culture.

Now, six decades on, PLAYBOY A-Z offers a new take on the philosophies and outlooks that Hefner & Co. have been developing since day one. PLAYBOY A-Z was created by people both fresh and familiar to the magazine, and we hope our lexicon entries add a surprising voice to the PLAYBOY ethos. Here you'll find serious ideas butting up against frivolity, hedonism against intellect and men against women. What we've engaged in here is frottage of the highest order, and what our alphabet speaks to is a classic PLAYBOY curiosity—the urge to look at the world in unaccustomed ways.

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ALPHA



Who's afraid of the big bad alpha female? Well, just about everyone. The dominant, free-roaming alpha female is a human invention. Among wolves in the wild, the alpha female isn't leader of the pack but merely the alpha male's main squeeze. He always gets to gorge on the kill first and to lope off after any she-wolf he chooses.

Before the emancipation of women that was triggered by the industrial revolution, the only way a female could claw her way to alpha status was through political power borrowed from a father or husband. Cleopatra, Elizabeth I and Catherine the Great were tough, shrewd operators who played the royal hand they were dealt to the max.

Over the past 50 years, the top echelons of business, government and education have been opened to women to an unprecedented degree. But women remain rare as hen's teeth at the corporate-CEO level, and the U.S. still hasn't elected a woman president or even vice president.

What's screwing it up? Sex, of course. What else is new? Old-guard feminists may squawk, but sex fiendishly complicates the alpha female's relationships at the office and out and about in the mating game.

Men don't have it easy. Their boring, sexless professional dress has barely budged since the 19th century. They still have to suit up in a rigid, body-shrouding uniform with only a dangling phallic tie peeking out for fun or flirtation. But women's office dress these days can cock-tease up a storm—sensuous fabrics, curvy silhouette, bare legs and drop-dead designer shoes with dominatrix stiletto heels. What's a guy to do? The alpha female boss says "Shut up and fall in line." But on the subliminal level where sexual desire percolates, her fashionista look beckons and winks, signaling that it's animal time.

How should an alpha female handle her off-site love life? Does she drop the cool command-and-control mask and go all kittenish and cuddly? Or does she cruise the party scene for beta men who dream of ticklish titillation by the woman with a whip? In short, does the rise of the workplace alpha female require the emasculation of men? Surely, alpha females, with their competitive drive for A-list service, won't really be happy with a cowering legion of limp-rag lovers.

A gnawing problem for the alpha female is her interactions with other women. In her duties as supervisor, she can come across as a bitch on wheels—whereas male managers are just called demanding. But too much friendly collaboration can make her authority leak away.

The battle of the sexes has been a hot issue since the dawn of civilization. The Bible trumpets that God made man in his own image and that Eve was an afterthought, patched up from Adam's rib. Then Eve goes alpha by forcing the forbidden fruit on weak-willed Adam. Result: our exile from

Eden and God's law that wives must submit to their husbands.

Jehovah's sexism was a tactic in the Hebrews' struggle against paganism, then overrun with alpha females. A remnant of those pushy ladies can be seen in Lilith in the Apocrypha, popular tales that never made it into the canonical Bible. Lilith was Adam's first wife, whom he divorced because she wanted ascendancy in the sex act. What we call the missionary position, with the man in charge and the woman pinned down, was the only way to go.

Lilith was originally a wind demoness whom the Hebrews encountered during their captivity in Babylon, a great metropolis portrayed by the Bible as a sewer of sin. It's true that prostitution was pretty open there. But Lilith was a pale shadow of Babylon's main alpha goddess, the fierce Ishtar, who ruled love and war. Another regional bruiser was the Mistress of the Beasts, a shapely maiden always depicted strangling two large animals with her bare hands.

Judeo-Christianity's fear and horror of the alpha female are vividly displayed in the Book of Revelation's nightmare apparition of the Whore of Babylon. Why hasn't this gal gotten her own movie yet? She's pictured riding a seven-headed, horned beast (symbolizing the seven hills of decadent Rome) and holding a golden cup filled with "the filthiness of her fornication." That cup is her insatiable vagina, brimming with semen that she has extracted from men's balls like crushed grapes.

The alpha female waxes and wanes like the moon throughout cultural history. In the Victorian era, women were idealized as the sanctified mother and devoted housewife. But movies soon discovered that the alpha female was great box office. After a spate of saccharine Victorian moppets in early silent film, Theda Bara, the man-destroying vamp, became a smash hit. The ultimate alpha female of film and fashion would be embodied in Marlene Dietrich, who was channeling the recreational sado-masochism and bisexual gender-bending of super-sophisticated Weimar Berlin.

Alpha female stars marched boldly into careerism in 1930s and 1940s movies in which manic Bette Davis and obsessive-compulsive Joan Crawford had trouble keeping sexual chemistry alive with their male leads. But eroticism returned with a bang in the postwar sex bombs inaugurated by Marilyn Monroe. In the naked materialism of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," Monroe, wrapped in incandescent hot pink, did sashaying burlesque moves to advertise her alpha conquest of a herd of tuxedoed male clones.

In the 1960s, alpha females got more athletic and Amazonian, as typified by bikini-clad Ursula Andress in her sensational emergence from the sea in *Dr. No*, a knife strapped to her waist and pink conch shells in her hands (a conflation of

male and female genitalia). The next big step was taken by the formidable stars of blaxploitation films, above all the curvaceous Pam Grier as ruthless Foxy Brown, who mowed down everyone in her path.

Alpha females brassily reclaimed careerism in the 1980s, starting with Joan Collins's campy Alexis Carrington on the prime-time TV soap *Dynasty*. Glamorously recycling Joan Crawford's mannish shoulder pads, Collins showed how to combine sultry sexuality with a hard-nosed lust for business. That decade also spawned Madonna's Dietrich-inspired blonde ambition, with its predatory chain of boy-toy pickups.

Angelina Jolie seemed to inherit the alpha female mantle in the 1990s, first as the punk fashion model Gia Carangi and later as superheroine Lara Croft, but she lost interest when she morphed into a global humanitarian. There was a trace of the surly, knife-wielding Gia in Rooney Mara's brooding performance as a biker-chick computer hacker in *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, but that character was too paranoid and recessive for a true A-list alpha female.

Jessica Chastain's steely undercover CIA agent in *Zero Dark Thirty* had balls to spare and, as a fanatical loner, may have been hurtling toward Joan Crawford territory. In *The Hunger Games*, Jennifer Lawrence created an appealingly human portrait of a future-world alpha female, armed like the goddess Diana with a lethal bow and arrow in a passionate struggle for survival. Nevertheless, Lawrence's stubborn girliness (light-years away from Ursula Andress's tawny tigress) may limit her reach to her own age demographic.

Consider Rihanna, for example, who has channeled Halle Berry's stylish Catwoman to pose as a killer vixen in scrumptiously seductive Instagram photos scattered to the world. But alas, all that dominance is just a ruse to win back her scummy abuser, rapper Chris Brown. The multitalented Rihanna, so charismatic behind her shimmering haze of smoke, seems oddly uncomfortable with her own power.

Is the alpha female starting to fade again? Today's young women, raised in a communal milieu of coed dorms and casual hookups, may be more team players than sexual autocrats. Significantly, in E.L. James's soft-porn trilogy, *50 Shades of Grey*, a mammoth international best-seller among women readers, the alpha male reigns supreme, making the young heroine his eager sex slave.

But after every eclipse, the alpha female always returns. She is embedded in humanity's collective unconscious. What she represents is the magic and mystery of sexual desire, which wells up from irrational depths and which neither men nor women have ever been able to fully control.

TEXT BY CAMILLE PAGLIA
PORTRAIT OF AIMEE MULLINS BY HOWARD SCHATZ

Bush

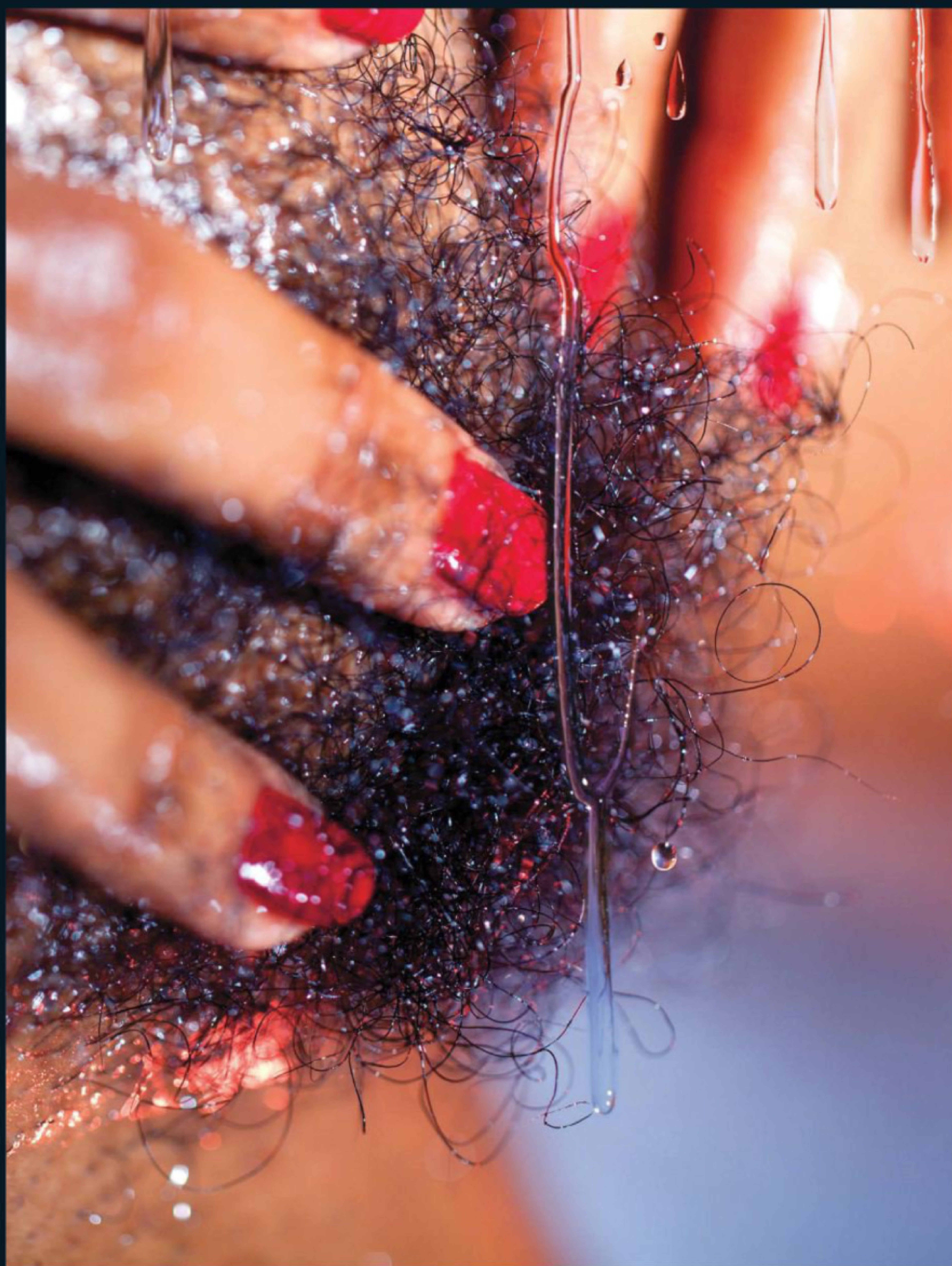
I found my first pubic hair during a sleepover at Kyla Warren's house. It was her 13th birthday, and while everyone else watched *The Exorcist* in the living room, my best friend, Aimee, and I—terrified—hid in the bathroom. During our sequestering, conversation turned to puberty, and that naturally led to our standing back-to-back and checking ourselves for pubes. "Oh my God," I said. "I have one hair!

*Through thick and thin.
A personal history of
(and a modest theory about)
bush*

How long has this been here?" I'd grown my first real live pubic hair—the beginning of a bush. And though I didn't know it at the time, that moment was the genesis of

a cycle of removal and regrowth that would be more merciless than Linda Blair's projectile vomiting.

I grew up in the 1980s, back when Madonna spread for *PLAYBOY* and you couldn't even see a slit through all that fur. When I was a kid, women's locker rooms were full of thick, musky, lush bush. My mother would lead me by my hand through the changing rooms; I was eye level with





STYLING BY OLYMPIA SCARRY; MAKEUP BY MARTIN SCHMID AT ALTERED AGENCY; MANICURE BY MYRTHI LEON-MCCORMACK AT FACTORY DOWNTOWN; MODELS: MOON AND MELISA.

muff after gloriously full muff. But the reality was, boobs were what I avoided looking at while being led through that wiry jungle, because boobs are naked *and* looking back at you. A bush is modest; it's basically 3-D underpants. Nowadays, locker rooms offer up a smorgasboard of adult vagina, from "bare like a baby" to "Howie Mandel's soul patch" to "Oh my God, you can have *that* much hair?" Kids must be confused.

For me, bush alteration began with simply trimming my bathing-suit line. As I became sexually active, I moved toward bushlessness in tiny increments. At first, it was cutting the hairs shorter but still keeping the full bush, then it moved on to removing all the hair in what I call my "undercarriage" (because I'm kind of modest). I eventually adopted the Howie Mandel soul patch, but these days my pussy is all over the place. Not in a promiscuous way but in the manner of a uniform hairstyle. I don't keep myself permanently waxed, because I'm lazy and it isn't a life-style necessity. I mean, I'm always bikini ready—because I live in California. That's just state law and I'm a law-abiding citizen. But I've *tried* everything, at various times, to keep up with the glamorous life of well-oiled pornographic vaginas. I've endured many Brazilian waxes, including one brutal mishap when she waxed the same area twice, fully removing a layer of actual labia. That double wax put me out of sexual commission for a week and made my vagina look like Freddy Krueger's face—sorry, Robert Englund, not very glamorous.

One thing I don't do is politicize bush—or the lack thereof—as a feminist statement. The closest I've come to making a statement with my pubes, albeit subconsciously, was letting them really fucking grow out—Jerry Garcia 50 hours into Woodstock style—because I wasn't interested in a boyfriend anymore. That's when

you know it's over, boys. Basically, I do what I feel is right for me sexually. (But maybe that *is* feminism.)

A lot of people think the hairless look is a modern invention. But they're wrong. Among the Egyptians, the Romans and even the otherwise hirsute Vikings, smoothly shorn women were considered fancy as fuck. And why not? Cleopatra? Waxed. It took good old Western religious zealotry to make bare labia feel immodest, and by Victorian times, the bush was in full bloom. It was like sex didn't even exist! In fact, pubes were so *au courant* then that the merkin became super trendy. That's right, people—a toupee for your vagina; you know, just in case your hair wasn't hairy enough. That was when we officially lost the clitoris for a period in time. The lost clit years. I'm sure Cleopatra had men and women bowing down to/on her clit and the Vikings were absolute clit worshippers. Then religion was all, "No! Stop enjoying the fucking around! Just marry, shoot sperm and make babies!" Boom. Covered vaginas.

Shaved vag was kind of a hush-hush thing women could start doing with the arrival of cheaper home razors in the 1950s, and shaving grew in popularity but was still considered "fetishy." It wasn't until Carrie Bradshaw got a Brazilian wax on *Sex and the City* that hairless vaginas went from underground quirk to something you could acquire at every strip mall in North America. We couldn't all afford Fendi baguettes, but we could scrape up the cash to get the hair ripped from our mounds and reintroduce our clitorises to the world, together.

I recently had a conversation with an Oscar-winning woman who told me the bush is back. (I mention the Oscar only because it clearly means her pop culture observations are more valid than ours. She did win an Oscar, after all.) "Young girls aren't waxing," she told me excitedly.

"Kim Kardashian is an 'old lady' to teens and 20-year-olds, and bald pussies and landing strips are considered very 1990s. Kim had hers permanently removed, and young girls consider that an old-lady thing." Wait, Kim Kardashian has old-lady vagina forever because her hair is permanently removed?

So if waxing and Kardashians are synonymous, and Kardashians are considered "old," is the official return of the bush imminent? We live in a society that rejects the concept of being even slightly senior. Carrie Bradshaw is pushing 50, so logically no lithe thing is trying to emulate her vagina in 2013.

In the past few years I've noticed young women with a little fuller, more natural bushes appearing in my Tumblr feed more often (though I follow "artistic photographers," which might stack the deck, pube-wise). Either way, I have to say it's a nice change. Maybe what's happening now is, since every single bush look has had its moment to shine and be accepted en masse with this generation of vaginas, women can finally choose how to adorn their mound without having to categorize themselves or feel categorized by partners or by kids in the locker room. Now that we all know how to use a clitoris, hiding it behind a little hair—if you want to—isn't going to make us forget about it.

Whether we go for full-blown 1970s beaver between our tanned thighs or a bald and vajazzled place to land, each woman should be doing what she wants to do with her pussy. If the big, big bush *totally* comes back, that's fine: As I mentioned, I'm lazy. And if enough women have had their pubic hair permanently removed to necessitate the return of the merkin, that's cool too. I'll be the first to send one to Kim Kardashian.

TEXT BY KELLY OXFORD
ARTWORK BY MARILYN MINTER

CENTERFOLD

**Legendary British essayist A.A. Gill recounts
his very personal history with *Playboy* in this
ode to the Centerfold**

My first knowledge of the cornucopia of goodness that was American sex was *PLAYBOY* magazine. My father got it every month, because of the writing, obviously. I never read a word. I looked at it for the astonishing breasts. These otherworldly women, standing astride Harley-Davidsons or getting out of baths, playing with drum kits and skis, and lying on many, many, many beds. Oh, the pneumatic glossiness of them. The heavy, shiny pages of the magazine weren't big enough to hold them. They needed their own, larger sheets to contain their smooth, glowing, undulating pulchritudinousness. They were perfect, ripe. It was like seeing some dreamy fruit at the point of optimum, plumpious juiciness. *PLAYBOY* was the harvest festival of sex: offerings of plenty. As a marketing invention, the Centerfold was sublime brilliance. It didn't feel prurient or dirty or seedy to look at these naked women: They weren't remotely like anyone we knew. *PLAYBOY* was the *National Geographic* of urbanity. My mother would snort and say, "They're not real, you know, those girls," and they weren't. That was their joy. In 1960s England our girls weren't even from the same species. We had jolly ladies in *Health and Efficiency* magazine, supposedly produced for nudists but really for 13-year-olds with their vests tucked into their Y-fronts. Or *Reveille*, a newsprint magazine for the armed forces, where the girls were swaybacked, tummy-sucked, with lantern jaws, squinty eyes, a straw hat and probably a judicious beach ball. They were obviously rude, and no better than they should be. But the *PLAYBOY* girls. That was like looking at the next rung of evolution. There was no sense that I, or any of my friends who came to snigger, would ever graduate to having a woman like this, any more than we'd be spacemen or cowboys. It wasn't just that we couldn't imagine what to do with them—we could imagine—but they plainly wouldn't have any idea what to do with us. What we saw at school were girls who played netball, with drippy noses and National Health spectacles. These women were like tableaux from High Renaissance mannerist paintings. Cloud-borne goddesses, evocations of justice and victory and charity. They were parables of America in their brilliant pink bodies that had been bred from the promise of fecundity and the harvest of fresh air and space and sun and lawn sprinklers. The dryads of

everything, of plenty: plenty of freedom, plenty of orange juice, plenty of recreational fucking.

Every month in *PLAYBOY* there was an advertisement with a headline that went: "What sort of man reads *PLAYBOY*?" It was selling subscriptions. But I always imagined it was advertising the men. What sort of man did read *PLAYBOY*? What sort of man got to mount the foldout women? I was particularly fascinated with them. The picture was always taken in what would probably be called a romper room, or the den, on two levels with cushions and leather armchairs. There was a sense of insouciance, opulence and technocratic ease. Three or four men, all best friends, would be arranged around, say, a piano. One of them would be playing silent jazz, the others holding crystal glasses, laughing. There would be a black one, one with a polo-neck cashmere sweater, one with a trimmed beard, one would smoke a pipe. And draped over them and around them like cashmere duvets would be girls. Great-breasted, wide-mouthed, sleek-limbed girls. The recreation of champions, resting their arms on the men's shoulders, looking deep into their eyes. My dad was a man who read *PLAYBOY*, but he wasn't like this. I was a boy who sneaked looks at *PLAYBOY*. Was there perhaps space for me under the piano, or behind the leather sofa?

I've just bought a book, *The Complete Playboy Centerfolds*. It's taken me some time to get through them, they're a thick read. Or perhaps a thick dribble. They've shrunk. They're now unfolded, staples removed, but it's an extraordinary journey through the postwar social history of American sex, and may well be the most wordlessly eloquent book on American sexuality and taste ever published. As I turned the pages, I would recognize girls. They'd come back to me like old school photos after 35 years, some Miss March or November would drag me back. Actually, not like old school photos. They begin in the 1950s and the 1960s as very odd-mannered tableaux, seminaked in everyday mundane settings, like the second act of a bedroom farce. The watcher can make up little scenarios for them: "I was just cleaning out this cupboard in the nude, except for these toweling pants and a bowler hat," and we just walked in, and they turned to the camera with a look of mild surprise. Not like, "Oh my God,

what are you doing in my bedroom?" Not like you were the window cleaner or leery Uncle Wilf, but like, "Oh my, you're early, hon. You caught me just like this on tiptoes, with nothing on but an artist's palette and a nylon polar bear." We, the invisible men in this little drama, we'd come in with our fishing rod or briefcase, or golf clubs, and she'd be surprised, a nice surprise, she was pleased to see us. "Oh, you should have told me you were going to be early, I'd have cleared away my old lacrosse kit and the balloons. Do you want to come on my magnificent breasts now, or shall I tell you about my day?" As they get into the 1970s, the pretense, the tiny pretense, of a scenario, of role-play, that the viewer can use to slip in, vanishes. They just pout. She gives you a name so that you can grunt something that isn't "bitch." She's a girl on brown satin sheets, whose look says, "What took you so long? I'm hotter than a George Foreman grill set to sear. Get in here and knock one out on these frankly unbelievable breasts." The 1990s are the autumn of the *PLAYBOY* Centerfold. Not only have the girls reached a level of stratospheric match-readiness, but the airbrushing makes them look as fine and shiny as customized Chevys. These ladies are pimped, and the century ends with a naked troika—wham!—the Dahm triplets.

The *PLAYBOY* Centerfold was never arty or cool. It was never chic or cutting-edge. They were rarely ever more than mildly raunchy. All through the decades they appeared behind the curve, and their curves are not negligible. *PLAYBOY* Centerfolds are an American trophy. The nation's hood ornament, from the limo of state. Every boy has passed under the shadow of those perfect breasts on the way to adulthood. They looked up and knew that this was the statuesque of liberty. Tom Sawyer messed about in rivers; postwar American boys messed about in garages with Centerfolds.

The Centerfolds of 1957, from January to December, are June, Sally, Sandra, Gloria, Dawn, Carrie, Jean, Dolores, Jacquelyn, Colleen, Marlene and Linda. In 2007 they were Jayde, Heather Rene, Tyran, Giuliana, Shannon, Brittany, Tiffany, Tamara, Patrice, Spencer, Lindsay and Sasckya. Bunny girls went from being the girl next door to the pole dancer upstairs, and they confirm a particular American sexual trope. This is breast country.

Bosoms are American. The rest of the body is really a delivery system for the great forward momentum of Mount Rushmore breasts.

In the great tradition of childish naming of taboo things, there are surprisingly few commonly used American vulgarisms for vaginas. It's a pussy, the anthropomorphic euphemism. Bottoms are tushies, botties, fanny—which over here is a front-bottom. In Europe there are hundreds and hundreds of words for vaginas: funny, fond, disgusting and fearsome. The most commonly used—*cunt*—is the “nigger” of body parts in America: unsayable in company, even young, liberal, cool company. You can't say “cunt” at the dinner table. At least “cunt” still retains a full battery of juice to shock. It is a votive obscenity. But the embonpoint has been doused with dozens of commonly used slang terms: *babbaloos*, *badoinkies*, *balloobas*, *bazukas*, *bazoomas*, *bejongas*, *boobs*, *boonies*, *boobsters*, *boulders*. And that, if you hadn't noticed, is just the *Bs*. Not even all the *Bs*. My personal favorite this week is *chesticles*: deeply misguided and wrong on every level, from the aesthetic to the biological. But what you can't fail to notice about these names is how toddlerish they are, how utterly infantile. Sound repetitions and visual onomatopoeia.

Breasts are a secondary sexual characteristic. They originally won their shot at stardom when we became bipedal, thereby robbing the bottom of its eye-level uxorious attraction. The breasts were pressed in to imitate the lost bum. The cleavage resembles buttocks, red lipstick mimics an excited vulva (if you've never seen an excited vulva). American fashion, art and popular culture venerate the cleavage, elevate those teetering, heavy breasts. Nowhere else in the world could have invented a chain of restaurants called Hooters. And in the *PLAYBOY* Centerfolds you can see how the shape and the style, the semaphore of breasts has changed. In the 1950s they have a spectacular, gravity-defying, cantilevered pointiness. In the 1970s they fall into braless teardrops. In the 1990s they're globular and solid, and every so often there are girls with small—well, smaller—breasts. Sort of normal-sized but still perkier than meerkats on coke. But it's merely a nod to sophistication, to the European girls who have petite booballaboobettes. They are only a pair of

placebos from a disappointing month. “Where's the meat?” said Mr. America.

Tom Ford has a theory that American design follows the shape of idealized American breasts. The 1950s are pointy, echoing the motorcar fins and the sci-fi look of things: missiles, UFOs, the brutalist, mechanical, cantilevered and aggressively questing breasts of optimism. In the 1960s and 1970s they elegantly slope in the rhythm of swirly, floaty, swinging, free, hippie-dippie design. The unstructured parabola breast. The racks of the 1990s were buffed and pumped. And now they're puffed up, symmetrical, and design is all puffed up, engorged. And there it is, America's gift to international eroticism: breast implants.

It's salutary to go from looking at 40 years of Centerfolds to the before-and-after shots for plastic surgeons on the hundreds and hundreds of websites for cosmetic empowerment. The photographs that the surgeons advertise themselves with are as shocking and as ghoulishly enticing as zombie movies. Cartoonishly globular, caricature breasts, made out of the tired and worn-out dugs of motherhood, breasts that have done their best, have been up in the middle of the night, have seen in exhausted dawns, done their thing creating. Breasts that you would have imagined would have earned a rest are due some manners. But here they are, made like the drawings from lavatory walls, the scars livid and jagged, puce and purple wounds. “After a year, the scars should be much decreased. Discomfort is generally negligible after two months.” The manufactured breast is such a familiar, common thing that they no longer have to look natural. They are “good jobs”—the job itself is a matter of aesthetic pride.

Breast enlargement changes and dictates fashion. A woman who's suffered the surgical pain, the scars like open-heart surgery, is always going to boast a cleavage: those banging, bim-bam bazookas are going to be out and proud. The mannequins in the kids' clothes shops in South Beach, Miami are all made with impossibly augmented breasts. You look in the windows and you're staring at plastic models of women who themselves have plastic tits, and the girls are going, “That halter neck would look great on me.”

Whatever the morality, the aesthetics, the politics of erotic imagery, what is

also amazing is that American thing: the commitment. When all's said and done, a secondary sexual characteristic is not the arena, it's not the VIP area. Breasts are the advertisement, the flyer. And it's the willingness to believe that you need to go to any lengths: “Yo, girl, you get those 34FFs, you deserve them. You've earned them.” There is an odd egalitarianism about cosmetic surgery. Don't be cheated of the dream by genetics, or diets, or age. You can have the bam-bam-bing-boings of an 18-year-old *PLAYBOY* Centerfold, because that's America. If you work for it, if you really, really wish for it with all your might and your eyes tight shut, then you'll get it.

But it won't do what it promised on the box. A nation that is as breast-conscious as America does something else to its women. This obsession means that men are always, always, always staring at your cleavage, your nipples. And it means that women who meet men face-to-face are always made aware with the handshake and the name exchange that they are, if not sexually available, sexually accountable. They are being assessed. Men can't help it. Heaven knows they try not to stare; they maintain fierce eye contact, but they grow up programmed to follow a ball with Centerfolds and these boom-bam-bubbubs. It's in the culture, what can I say? “Nice top bollocks.”

Women can do one of three things. They can ignore it, which is easier some days than others, or they can confront it: “Hey, soldier, eyes up and front.” But that's not always practical or helpful. Or you can dress for breast, like going out on a mission, like wrapping up for the cold. A woman says, “There's going to be men out there,” and she can either go offense or defense. In America you see women wrapped up with their shoulders hunched forward and bowed backs, in bras that are too small for them, and you know these are the mammary martyrs: self-conscious, exposed, resentful. Or you go proactive, DEFCON ballistic, and get them out for the boys. Make it their problem: “Deal with it, guys. You are never, repeat never, going to get a soapy tit wank from these bad babies.”

If you visit the vacationing, flirty, balmy bits of America, you'll see men and women being pulled around by breasts, like magnets, both defined by this strange and original cultural obsession. And just while

Tom Sawyer messed about in rivers; postwar American boys messed about in garages with Centerfolds.

we're here, whatever happened to the areola? Most girls under 30 didn't even know they'd got a couple, or that they had a name (not to be confused with the aureola, the golden corona that surrounds a saint's head). Areola is that pink or tan ring around the nipple. In the 1950s they were huge: They stood out like the ends of ice cream cones, but now they're shrinking. They grow paler, nipples get smaller and longer, they go digital, changed from being the big switches and dials of old stand-alone radiograms and appliances. Now they're touch-sensitive on and off buttons. Like touch-screen technology, you just scroll them up and down.

And the last thing you notice about the PLAYBOY girls is their pubic hair. The sexual alopecia. I feel nostalgic for bushes; it's where I came in. But they've shrunk down to nothing. Past the American wax, the French wax, the landing strip, the Hitler moustache, the arrow, then the Brazilian or the Hollywood. Sometimes, I'm told, called the Sphinx, after a bald cat discovered in Canada (pussy, geddit? Of all the places to be a bald cat, Canada must be the worst). So it isn't named for the female-chested, lion-eagle-snake creature who met men on mountain passes, asked them three questions, then tossed them off.

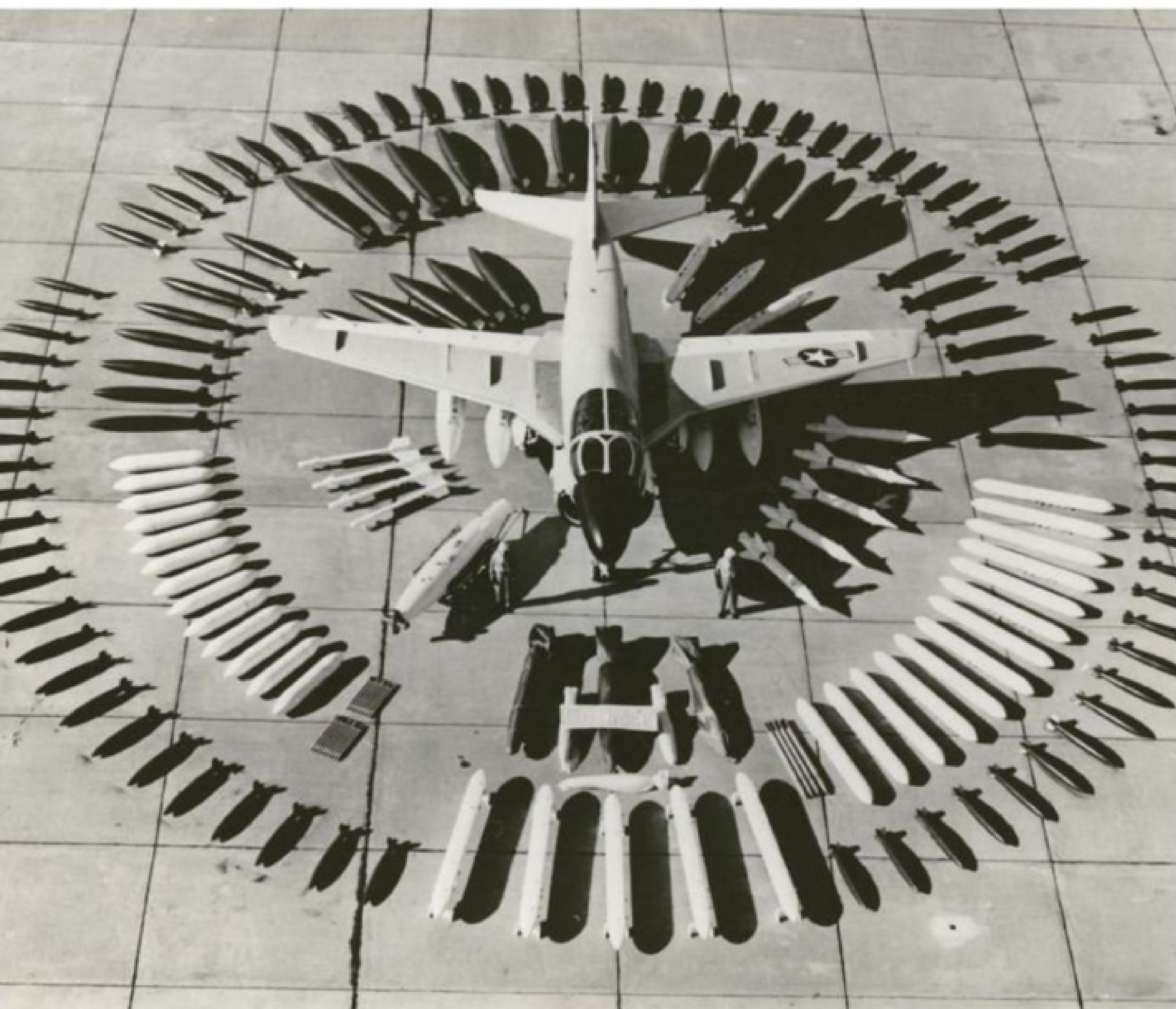
You have to consider the immense commitment to aesthetic satisfaction, to arrange the *mise-en-scène* just so, to arrange the decoration, the walk-through ambience, to be that minimal. To put up with the pain, the regular, awful pain and intimate humiliation of having your legs hoicked in the air and having hot wax applied to your arsehole and then ripped off by an uncaring immigrant woman who has to do this to maintain a toehold job that perpetuates the legend of America. "What did you do when you got here, Mommy?" "I ripped the stubble off strangers' cunts." Bring me the huddled masses yearning to be hair free.

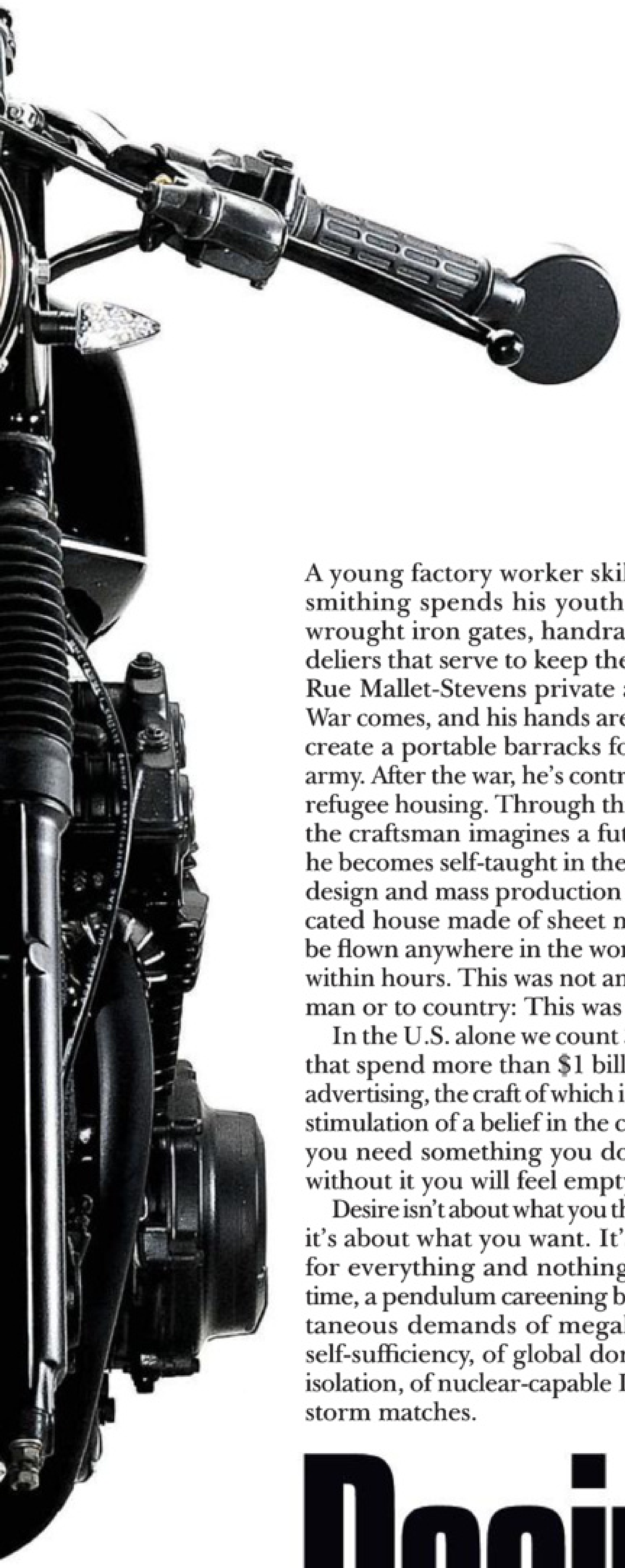
I can't choose a favorite PLAYBOY Centerfold: They are all of them marvelous. As we used to say as lads, you wouldn't say no to any of them for eating crisps in bed. They are the caryatids of freedom and good, hygienic fun. But there is one that sticks in my mind: January 2007, Jayde Nicole. Jayde has apparently just come for a visit. She stands in my doorway with this "Hiya, it's only me, fancy nailing me to the sofa?" face. Outside

it's snowing—one of those lovely, crisp, northern days, fir trees heavy. Jayde is wearing boots, white socks and a woolly scarf with Canadian maple leaves. Silly girl. So gagging for it she's arrived without pants or anything else. She's not even got goose bumps, but she stands in the doorway, one knee cocked, her big winter breasts keeping her warm. With a snowy grin and one hand on the door handle, she's completely Sphinxed. Her vagina looks tight, like a little, neat, hairless, minimal Wendy-house noo noo. And there, just above where her pubic hair would have once grown, is a tattoo. They haven't airbrushed it out or put concealer on it because it's telling, it's cute. It's part of who Jayde is. She's standing there naked, shaved, available in a Centerfold in the noughties, smiling at strangers, and above her prepubescent pudenda is one indelible word. *Respect*. Who says this is a nation without irony?

TEXT BY A.A. GILL

From *To America With Love* by A.A. Gill.
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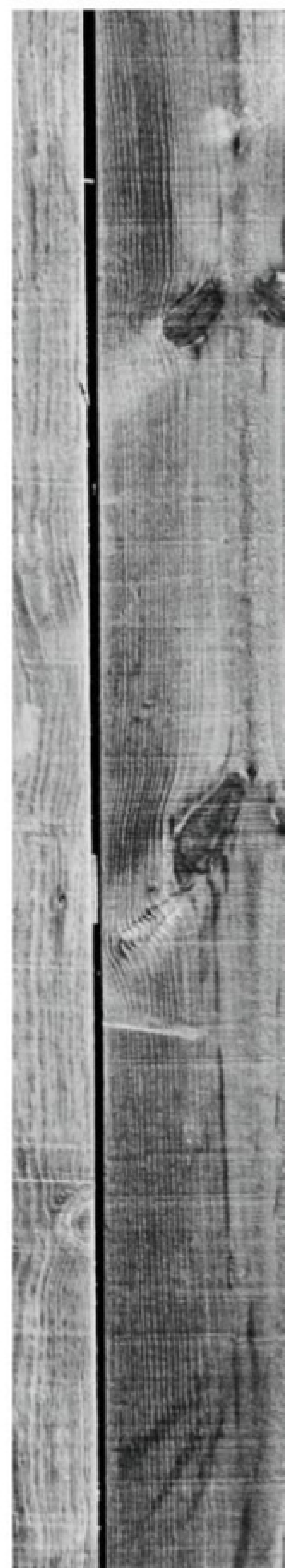
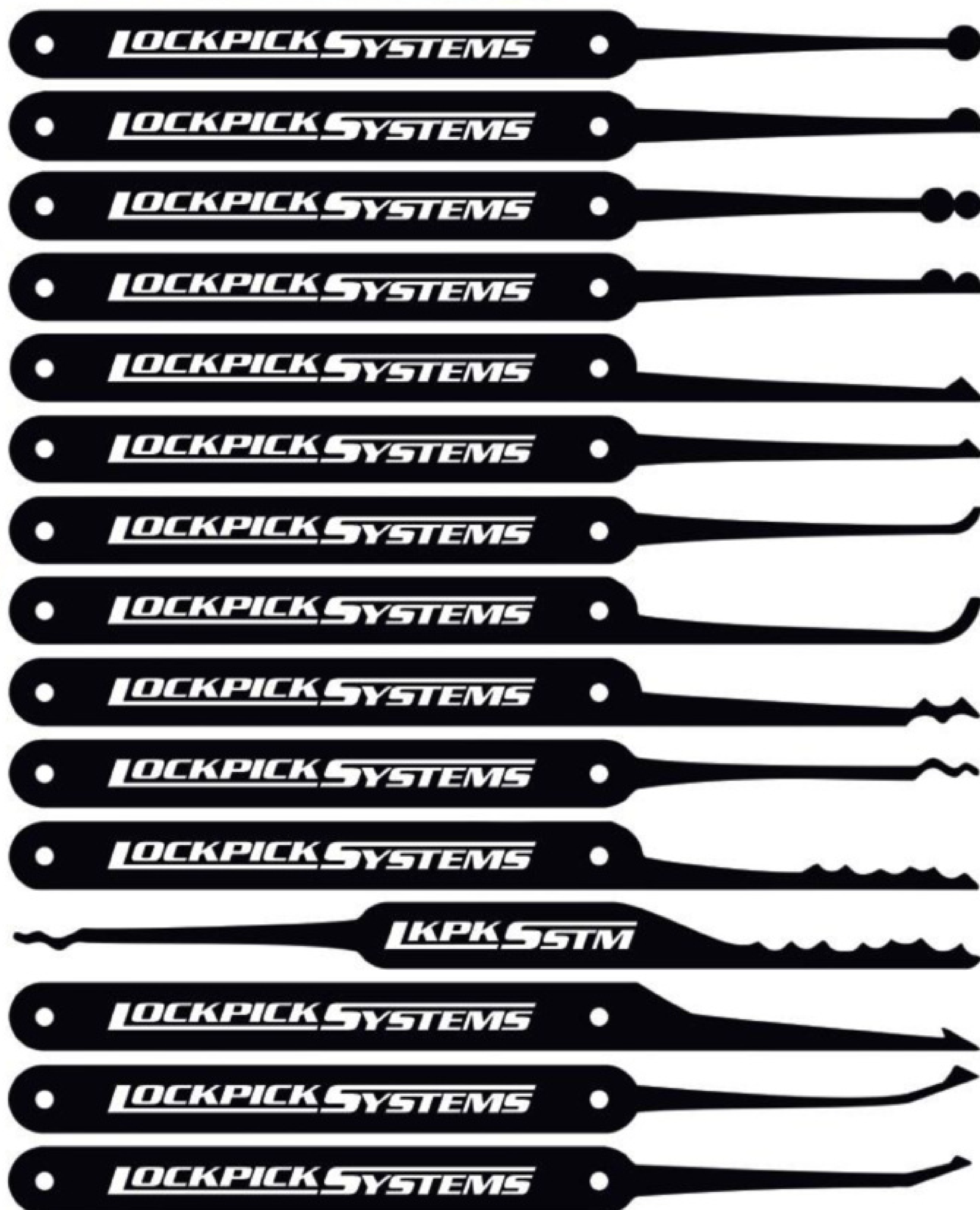
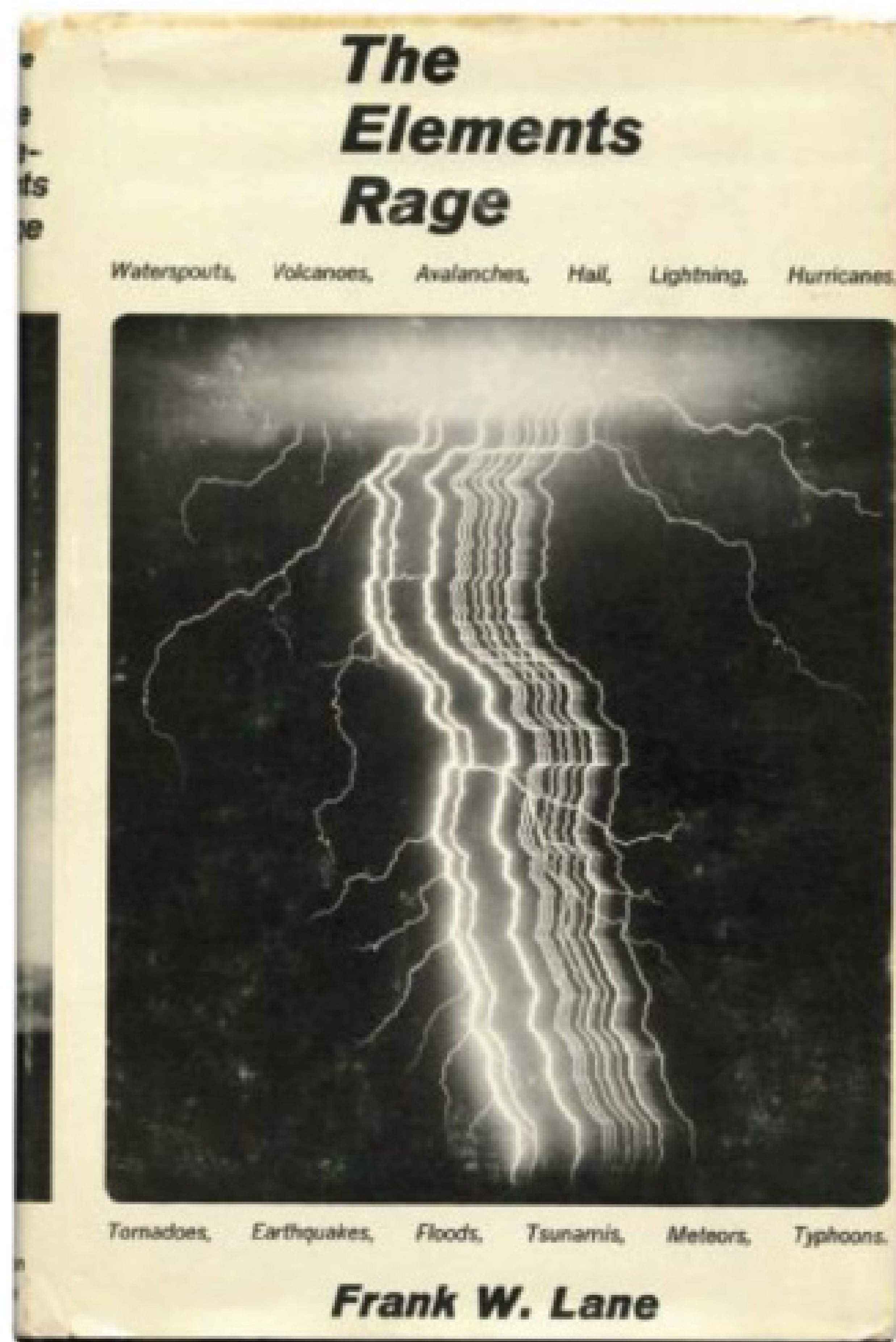
A young factory worker skilled in blacksmithing spends his youth crafting the wrought iron gates, handrails and chandeliers that serve to keep the mansions of Rue Mallet-Stevens private and rarefied. War comes, and his hands are employed to create a portable barracks for the French army. After the war, he's contracted to build refugee housing. Through this experience, the craftsman imagines a future in which he becomes self-taught in the architecture, design and mass production of a prefabricated house made of sheet metal that can be flown anywhere in the world and set up within hours. This was not an obligation to man or to country: This was desire.

In the U.S. alone we count 36 companies that spend more than \$1 billion a year on advertising, the craft of which is rooted in the stimulation of a belief in the consumer that you need something you don't have and without it you will feel empty.

Desire isn't about what you think you need; it's about what you want. It's the longing for everything and nothing at the same time, a pendulum careening between simultaneous demands of megalomania and self-sufficiency, of global domination and isolation, of nuclear-capable Intruders and storm matches.

Desire







To connect with the natural world, boyhood fantasies and waking dreams, we must allow the hunger for solitude and speed, and expose ourselves to the thrill and chaos of the elements. With classical technology as instruments, we are given a return not to nature as pure state but to the blade, the grind and purr of the open road, the domicile that elevates us above the ordinary, the dazzle of our own imprint upon the mass-produced.

Time is the commodity that affords us our desires. The unearthed skull of a dinosaur consumed by the soil 90 million years ago invokes visions of a lost world just as the perfect inhalation of the ball by the net emits a sound that reinforces us for a fragment of a second with a feeling that's not for sale.

We are elemental beings: The tools we put in our hands become talismanic reminders of a more spiritual quest. True desire is the compass by which we locate ourselves within a life of inundation by technology and product. Time, speed, accuracy, intimacy, play, refuge, security, survival, sex (and the odd sandwich) can return as the guiding instincts of an existence often distracted by emptiness we are provoked to fill.

CAR: PATRICIA VAN LUBECK; MOTORCYCLE: COURTESY OF STEEL BENT CUSTOMS; SKULL: *POPULAR SCIENCE*/GETTY IMAGES; SKATE WHEELS: COURTESY OF SUPREME; BASKETBALL: WILLIAM CARPIO; FIGHTER JET: COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM; CONSTRUCTION AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE IN MAXÉVILLE, 1949, JEAN PROUVÉ © CENTRE POMPIDOU MNAM/CCI BIBLIOTHÈQUE KANDINSKY. TREEHOUSE: NEIL ROGERS/THE ICE COLLECTION; MARIJUANA: SHUTTERSTOCK; C-EAR X CUSTOM EARPHONES POWERED BY KIND; MATCHES: T. FORSHAW/EDCGEAR.CO.UK; HATCHET: COURTESY OF OSCAR DÜLOW.



Look at this woman; she is beautiful. Her voice is sticky sweet and butter soft. Her orgasms, by her admission, are deep and ecstatic. She drinks coconut water. She has a particular affinity for Kiehl's products. The first thing she does after climbing out of bed is brush her teeth.

"In some cases the body into which we are born does not reflect the gender we are." At 24, she is still developing and refining her worldview, her interests, the type of man she's looking for. Her name is Ines.

At eight years old she knew she was female. This instinct came before her first palpable crush on a boy, before the spring of puberty, before the trembling joys of sex. As she came of age, this awareness remained distinct from her sexual orientation. It was a matter of who she was—and who she was did not fit along the confines of gender roles ascribed by Western culture.

Ines began her transition from male to female (MTF) at the age of 14. By the time she was 16, her anatomy reflected her gender identity. The sex-reassignment surgeries (SRS) took place in the vibrant city of Montreal. She had the support of her family. Her greatest fear in going through the transition was of being misunderstood.

The beautiful thing about this fear: It's one that every single human being on Earth can identify with.

Gender is not a new construct. It is a classification of identity, refracted and interpreted through the lens of societal norms. In France, where our heroine resides, it is called *genre*, a term we might more quickly identify with cinema. In cinema there are subgenres: the spaghetti Western. The road movie. The romantic comedy. In gender, subgenres also exist.

The term *transgender* has been murky for some time but has increasingly come to represent the third gender: a gender that does not fit within the binary of male/female and instead umbrellas the myriad subgenres of gender fluidity. The array is dizzying—transsexual, transvestite, cross-dresser, genderqueer, androgyne, bi-gender, pan-gender, agender, gender fluid, to reference a fraction. The distinctions between them are important.

"The primary instinct in my experience and, I believe, for many is simply the desire to rectify a mistake of nature at birth." Ines is not an activist or a performance artist. She is not a drug addict. She is not a prostitute. (Before she drew the attention of *Vogue Italia*, she was a student at the Sorbonne.) Until this moment, she has remained stealth,

concealing from those beyond her most intimate circle that she was born into the body of a male.

Ines is asked on more dates than your average wallflower and fewer than Taylor Swift. To dispel any possible confusion: She is not a gay man with female anatomy; she is a woman. She is attracted to straight men. Unsurprisingly, straight men are attracted to her. "It all depends on the man, his story, his vision of the world. Religion, everything."

She's talking about his reaction to her truth.

There are two worlds: the tangible world we experience through personal journey and present context, and the one that unfolded long before our birth and will continue long after our existence. The first is a rolling tide that gathers us in its current, a world in which we choose what we believe, what we feel, how we act, how we respond to the external. In this world we are propelled by the oars of fear and desire.

The other is the primary world, in which wars have been lost and won and lost again, territories conquered, acquired, colonized and abdicated in the wake of surrender. A world in which past would mirror present, would we consult it. But we freak at the thought; we have come so far, or perhaps because we feel so close to the future.

The third gender belongs to the primary world. It was present in prehistoric times and resurfaced in the Middle Kingdom of Egypt, in ancient Greece and in the Galli of ancient Rome. It was integral to Vedic culture and early Mayan and Incan civilizations. The Sworn Virgins of the Balkans. The two spirits of Native American tribes. The *hijra* of India. The Thai *phet thi sam*. The *ashtime* of the Maale. *Mashoga* of Mombasa. *Mangaiko* of the Congo. *Muxe* of Mexico. The *bissu* of the Bugis of Indonesia. *Fa'afafine*. *Mukhannathun*. *Xanith*. *Mahu*. The third gender has been both celebrated and persecuted, sacred and taboo. What's undeniable is that it exists and will continue to evolve in tandem with medical, sociological and scientific advances.

SRS, long considered an extreme measure, becomes less easily stigmatized when placed in the context of the booming industry of face-lifts, botox, labiaplasty, hair plugs,

Breaking binary: inside the brave new world of the third sex

TEXT BY SARA CLINE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN MCGINLEY

rhinoplasty, liposuction, breast augmentation, cheek implants, chin implants, penis implants, knee lifts, abdominoplasty, buttock lifts, otoplasty, acid peels and self-sculpting procedures we haven't invented yet.

Past being prologue, "homosexuality" was classified as a mental disorder in the *DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)*, a.k.a. the Bible of Psychiatry until it was finally reclassified and withdrawn in 1987. Twenty-six years later the Supreme Court overturned DOMA, effectively passing the landmark ruling that paves the path for gays to be legally married. That's one generation between mental illness and equal rights. The precursor to this revolution is a long legacy of civil rights movements: equal rights for blacks, equal rights for women. History would suggest that—at least in the free world—equal rights for all is inevitable.

Let's posit this: If Andy Warhol rose from his permanent slumber to throw an exclusive party for the third gender, he would find himself quietly observing cardiologists, video game designers, a professional golfer, politicians, sociologists, computer scientists, a World War II fighter pilot, a Grand Prix motorcyclist, classical musicians, a Thai boxer, a Cuban politician and a few nervous economists. Fashion models and pop singers. Ghosts of the Civil War. A professional tennis player. A Tokyo municipal official. A senior vice president at Prudential Financial. A neurobiologist, a Navy Seal, playwrights, the co-director of *The Matrix*, schoolteachers, lawyers, philanthropists and a double-bass musician. Warhol would stand immersed in a brave new world (which he might even be right to take some credit for).

Unlike Warhol's thriving fringe community—a reflection of his time and context—Ines does not live in the margins; for the past eight years she has architected her body and gender in a way that has enabled her to blend into the mainstream.

"[SRS] is very intimate, and in my case it was a family decision that took place when I was very young. I have often not felt obligated to give this very personal information to people I've just met. It's not to be deceptive; it's because I have been a woman for so long that it didn't feel relevant. This is the beauty of being. What I have suffered from is the fear of being rejected by someone who cannot process the information. I don't like to hurt people. It is a lot of pressure. That's why I'm coming out. I want to be accepted the way I am without the fear of being judged."

Look at this woman.

EVOLUTION



Free•dom | 'frē dəm | **NOUN** (1) *The power or right to act, speak or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint* (2) *absence of subjection to foreign domination or despotic government* (3) *the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved* (4) *the state of being physically unrestricted and able to move easily* (5) *archaic familiarity or openness in speech*



GRILNEXT DOOR



*Perhaps what you're
looking for is right in your
own backyard*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HENRIK PURIENNE



HAIR AND MAKEUP BY KARINA MOORE, MODELS: BECCA AT HEARTBREAK MANAGEMENT, BROOKLYN, CALIN, HANNAH K., MAGGIE AT NO TIES MANAGEMENT, HANNAH G. AT COCO & CO., PRODUCTION BY SIX WOLVES.











HUGH HEFNER'S PLAYBOY PHILOSOPHY: *Excerpts from his original credo, 1962–1966*  DECEMBER 1962 We do not consider sex either sacred or profane. The logic that permits a person to call down God's wrath on anyone for displaying a bit of God's own handiwork does, we must admit, escape us.

 JANUARY 1963 You don't have to be a homosexual to read Oscar Wilde or an alcoholic and a drug addict to appreciate the prose and poetry of Edgar Allan Poe.  FEBRUARY 1963 Man's new zest for living can be seen in his interest in a car that has style and speed, in his savoring the pleasures of the senses with good food and drink and stereo sound, in his involvement in the decor of his apartment and the cut of his clothes.

 MARCH 1963 We've successfully sustained our freedom of religion, but not freedom from religion.  MAY 1963 We do not believe that a satisfactory definition for obscenity can ever be established. It has long seemed quite incredible—indeed, incomprehensible—to us that detailed descriptions of murder, which we consider a crime, are acceptable in our art and literature, while detailed descriptions of sex, which is not a crime, are prohibited. It is as though our society put hate above love—favored death over life.  SEPTEMBER 1963 Modern American morality is an amalgamation of the superstitious paganism and masochistic asceticism of early Christianity; the sexual anxieties, feelings of guilt and shame, witch-hunting sadism and sex repression of the medieval Church; the desexualized courtly love of the troubadours; and England's Romantic Age, wherein love was presumed to conquer all.  DECEMBER 1963 The anti-intellectual syndrome in America is a part of our society's subconscious desire to elevate the mediocre and demean the uncommon

in education and intellect. We think it is natural and right for the individual to be principally concerned with himself. Society should exist as man's servant, not as his master. The purpose in man's life should be found in the full living of life itself and the individual pursuit of happiness.

 JANUARY 1964 Each man's freedom should be limited only to the extent that it infringes upon the freedom of others.

 FEBRUARY 1964 Sin and crime are not synonymous. But many of our laws are evolved from old ecclesiastical laws, from religious beliefs and dogma, to which some of our citizens subscribe, and many others do not. No one can reasonably question the powerful role that sex plays in all our lives. It is a dominant force in society. It can be a force for either good or evil, but sex in itself is neither. Control over marriage gives the government control over sex.

 APRIL 1964 The American male's concern over his masculinity amounts to an obsession. And as we have observed in our consideration of the history of antisex in our culture, such an obsession usually represents a repressed fear.

 SEPTEMBER 1964 Though we are free citizens in most other respects, in sex we are the slaves of society and the state. It is fortunate that no examining officer can single out the majority of the men who have had some homosexual experience, since the ranks of our Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines would be severely depleted if the one male in every three who has engaged in such activity was not permitted to serve.

 MAY 1966 Prostitution flourishes specifically because of the double standard that exists for male and female sexual morality, and the prostitution laws of the United States are, themselves, patently anti-female.

From The Playboy Philosophy, Parts I-XXV



Insert key and turn: Introducing the Playboy Charger by artist Richard Phillips

Cam



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADRIAN GAUT

TI00n



STYLING BY AKARI ENDO-GAUT; HAIR BY CECILIA ROMERO AT ART DEPARTMENT; MAKEUP BY CARLO LONGO AT BRYAN BANTRY AGENCY; MANICURE BY MARTHA FEKETE; MODEL: LEANNA; CAR PRODUCTION BY HIRE MOTORCARS, INC.









"God! Your Jackson Pollock always puts me in a frenzy."

A traveling salesman's car broke down one evening on a lonely road and he asked at the only farm house in sight. "Can you put me up for the nite?" "I reckon I can," said the farmer. "But you'll have to share the room with my young son ." "How about that!" gasped the salesman. "I'm in the wrong joke."



PHOTOGRAPH BY JUERGEN TELLER

After a terrible talk with her husband, Dylana flew to the wedding of Irina's daughter, Bianca. Irina had been a delicious red-haired woman (*woman*, never a girl) with a gorgeous fat ass and a soft, eloquent back. She had ridden her life hard, had beaten the hell out of her liver and aged fast, but even with veins in her legs she could still wear a skirt, and there was delicious feeling in her bright, high-heeled gait. After leaving home at 14, she'd taken her education from the street, TV and older boyfriends; now she made hats and sold them in her own shop. She had raised her three grown children almost single-handed, all in the same apartment where she cooked up her hats. And now here was her oldest, Bianca, coming down the aisle in a white dress on her brother's arm.

Dylana looked on with stunned happiness that was like a rim of fiery light on massing darkness.

Tu sei bellissima. I tuoi occhi, le tue labbra, sei così bella. Ti amo, ti voglio.

Her husband didn't say that. It was an Italian guy she'd met on a bus. She wanted him to fuck her in the ass, and even though they couldn't understand each other, he knew, he went right for it—but for some reason she stopped him and he politely switched it up.

Bianca stood before them, her mother's bright spirit shining in her eyes and shaping her smiling lips. Her whole small body brimmed with love. The church was filled with flowers. Irina's friend Pamela, a former horse trainer, had spent days making the arrangements, the bouquets, buttonholes, wristbands, pew bows and hairpieces; they had all gone to Pamela's apartment, where the calloused woman sat surrounded by her fragile creations, and they had loaded them into the van driven by the groom. Pamela had made corsages for the guests, and everyone had been given a little bottle of bubbles too, and a wand to blow them with.

"Ai!" went the Italian guy. "Ai! Ai! Ai!"

Dylana's own wedding shimmered before her, a beautiful hallucination on hot, terrible sand. Tears ran down Irina's transformed face; the hallucination rippled and became real. Dylana had married 15 years ago. Everyone had turned to watch as she walked across the lawn in her dress and veil. Dappled trees moved against the bright sky, hawks flew overhead. David waited, radiant and proud. When he lifted the veil, he took her face in his hands, and his arms constricted up into his shoulders as if tightening against too much emotion.

The minister spoke; the ceremony began. Memory rolled in on a dark tide of laughing faces and trash talk. She was drunk at a bar with women she half knew,



A wedding of humiliation and bliss

they were loving the story of the guy on the bus: He'd used hand signals to tell her he was 55, then raised his eyebrows and pointed at her. She wrote "51" on a piece of paper. He popped his eyes, pointed at her body and gave the thumbs-up. The women laughed.

"Do you take this man to be——"

The filth, the way she'd talked—worse than adultery, filth. She had to leave David, she'd infect him if she didn't. But she couldn't leave, she loved him.

"For richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health——" So they went to therapy and she said, "I want an open marriage."

"Can't we just lie like everybody else?" he said. Bianca said, "I give myself fully to you as you give yourself to me." "I don't mean all the way open, I mean just like a cat door. For special situations, like in a foreign country, where it doesn't threaten the marriage." The therapist looked at David and said, "Do you love this woman enough to do that for her?" David said, "I'm too proud." "That's not what I asked. I asked, do you love this woman?"

"You may now kiss the bride."

Music played, people shouted. They unstopped their bottles and filled the church with bubbles. A little boy tried to kiss a little girl but she pushed him away. Everyone went to the reception hall and ate heavy food.

After therapy they went out with David's friends to hear live music. The band was raucous, and Dylana pounded the table and shouted. David looked at her, his sadness so pure she could not bear to look back. His friends laughed and drank, unknowing. When they went home she shut herself up and googled "humiliated whores."

The little boy tried to take the girl's hand; she pushed him away almost tearfully.

When Jack asked us to humiliate the fuck out of his incredibly slutty wife, we gladly obliged.

"But you don't want that, you want love. I can feel you, you're like a little bird, sunning itself in love." She remembered the man who had said that, more like a song than a man. They'd danced on Halloween, she a vampire victim with a false wound, he a priest in bell-bottoms. "Darling," he said, "you're drunk, you don't know what you're doing."

And when we were done, the dirty whore wanted more! They stuck a gag in her mouth and tied her up with her legs spread and shaved her. One of them said, "Let us know if anything hurts, baby." Then they rubbed oil on her and finger-fucked her.

People made toasts and jokes. Dylana saw Bianca's father, a guy who'd beat up Irina before she'd kicked him out. He looked old but handsome, smiling and talking to his son, their collars loose. He and Irina didn't get near each other, but still he was there.

They said "humiliate" but it seemed like they loved her. They said, "Look at those beautiful tits, look at that gorgeous pussy." They touched her and rubbed her, all of them. One of them took out the gag and said, "You're going to suck the first cock that comes. Your husband wants to see you suck some cock." Dylana wanted this too. But with David, not Google men. She thought of it all the time, of doing it in their bedroom on the coverlet she'd given him, the cat rolling on the floor, the sun pouring in. The picture of him as a baby watching from the dresser.

The little boy and girl she'd seen before walked across the floor, his arm around her, she leaning on his shoulder.

David wept. He cried, "I wanted to bring you happiness!" She kissed him, weeping too. "You did, you did, I love you, you did!"

It was terrible. But at least he hadn't beat her or killed her. That was something.

The little boy crouched to let the little girl climb up upon his back. Music came on the sound system and Irina cried, "Come on, let's dance!" Even though she'd worked at the store all morning and then rushed to get her hair done, even though the heel on one of her shoes was broken, Irina took Dylana's hand and they danced, Irina bursting with love and Dylana leaning into it blind.

"Not bad," said Irina's boy, walking past.

I asked, do you love this woman? I do. Yes. Yes, I do. The children ran through the room, the little girl laughing and holding on.

TEXT BY MARY GAITSKILL

MONOGAMY

Of all the lies people tell one another, there is none that is as ubiquitous, as corrosive to happiness and as laughably untrue as the classic declaration of undying love that excludes all others, forever and ever. “Marriage,” Oscar Wilde famously said, “is the triumph of imagination over intelligence.” Perhaps, but it’s not marriage per se that suggests a vanquished intelligence; it’s the nearly universal expectation that a happy couple will “forsake all others” for the rest of their lives—without coming to despise each other in the process. There is a crisis in modern marriage today (the U.S. Census Bureau tells us that about *half* of first marriages end in divorce), and the culprit is easy to find. Monogamy is what’s wrong with marriage. Our notions of till-death-do-us-part conjugal bliss demand that we confuse “love” with “lust,” even though the two are as distinctly different as red wine and blue cheese. And sure, they may complement each other when they happen to be in the same place at the same time, but they are discrete, fully autonomous energies. Love might settle in for a lifetime, growing comfortable and sinking roots; lust comes and goes as it pleases. Love is like a farmer, tilling the soil, planning for future harvests. But lust is an explorer, a wanderer, an outlaw. No wonder the Spanish word *esposas* means both “wives” and “handcuffs.”

But this isn’t the story we’re told by popular culture, religious authorities, mainstream scientists and a legion of therapists who insist—despite a world of evidence to the contrary—that steadfast love and burning desire go hand in hand. This campaign to misrepresent the true nature of human sexuality leaves virtually all of us submerged in a rising tide of sexual frustration, libido-killing boredom, betrayal, confusion, dysfunction and shame. The only widely acceptable alternative to the one-marriage, one-sexual-partner strait-jacket—so-called “serial monogamy”—stretches before and behind many of us like a dismal archipelago of failure, islands of transitory happiness in a cold, dark sea of disappointment and loss.

Amazingly, for a problem central to so many lives, we rarely dare discuss

“The prerequisite for a good marriage, it seems to me, is the license to be unfaithful.”—Carl Jung, in a letter to Sigmund Freud (January 30, 1910)

the absurdity of expecting our love and lust to march in lockstep. When the subject is raised, nobody knows what to say. Bill Maher asked the obvious question while discussing the Eliot Spitzer situation on his HBO talk show: “When a man’s been married 20 years,” Maher said, “he doesn’t want to have sex, or his wife doesn’t want to have sex with him.... What is the right answer?... Is it to just suck it up and live the rest of your life passionless, and imagine somebody else when you’re having sex with your wife the three days a year that you have sex?” After a long, fraught silence, Jon Hamm, the tortured lothario of *Mad Men*, suggested simply abandoning the marriage. “Move on,” he advised. “I mean, you’re an adult.” The normally outspoken journalist P.J. O’Rourke, sitting with Hamm on the panel, just looked down in silence.

But is divorce really the “adult” response to the inherent conflict between adolescent romantic ideals and the inconvenient nature of human sexuality? Is there no way to accommodate reality that’s a bit less drastic than the bloody sacrifice of an otherwise functional—possibly even wonderful—marriage?

I was recently sitting in a hotel lobby when I noticed a sexy woman walking across the room. My attention then turned to a textbook-miserable married couple sitting stiffly on a sofa nearby. They were unmoving, but a hurricane of resentment was raging all around them. He was bitterly pretending not to notice the sexy woman. His wife was angrily pretending not to notice that he was pretending not to notice. When they both looked at me, I pretended not to notice what they were pretending not to notice. What a fucking mess! Why is it still considered a taboo-busting provocation to say out loud that no matter how much we love each other, sexual passion for the familiar fades? And no matter how

deep our bonds, we’ll still notice—and desire—other people? For both men and women, erotic engagement with a novel partner (even if only in flirtation or fantasy) can be one of life’s greatest tonics: revitalizing, enhancing, energizing. What evil agenda has convinced us to pretend otherwise? I’m not saying the couple in the lobby should have invited the sexy woman up to their room—not necessarily—but what would have been the harm in acknowledging her obvious beauty? Do they angrily pretend to ignore rainbows and sunsets as well?

Why should it be surprising that we crave variety in our sexual lives? The human appetite for something new is taken as a natural expression of our species’ intelligence when it comes to music, art, cuisine, architecture and so on. After all, *Homo sapiens* is the ultimate omnivore. No other creature eats more different kinds of things than we do—from seeds to snails, roots to rats, and ants to elephants. A hunger for erotic novelty is utterly normal for our species. It has evolved into our bones, you might say. No other creature on Earth spends as much of its time and energy obsessing over sex. Most mammals have sex only when the female is ovulating. For them, sex is about reproduction. But human beings fuck in all sorts of configurations that can’t *possibly* lead to pregnancy. Consider the raw numbers. In our “natural” state—in pre-agricultural hunter-gatherer groups without birth control—our species averages around 1,000 sex acts per birth. Gorillas are more typical of mammals in enjoying only around a dozen or so sexual encounters per baby gorilla born. Chimpanzees and bonobos, the two apes most closely related to us, share our proclivity for nonreproductive sex, coming in at more than 500 sexual encounters per birth. The dolphin, another highly intelligent animal living in large, complex social groups, is the aquatic member of this libidinous hall of fame. For all these species—and especially for our own—sex has never been primarily about reproduction. Babies have always been a by-product of sex, not its central purpose.

Strange as it may sound, many pre-agricultural societies aren’t very clear on precisely *how* sex results in babies. Some

hold that a fetus is literally made of accumulated semen. Any sexually active woman is thought to be always at least a little bit pregnant, but her fetus won't begin to develop until she reaches a tipping point. And like women everywhere, the female members of these societies (most of them in Amazonia) aspire to have children who are smart, strong, funny and unique. To that end, the prospective mother will "solicit contributions" from smart men, strong men and funny men. When an anthropologist working with the Aché people in Paraguay asked his subjects to identify their fathers, he was presented with a head-scratcher. The 321 villagers he polled claimed to have, cumulatively, more than 600 fathers. Who's your daddies?

While a society full of shared dads may strike us as a recipe for disaster, the ensuing interlocking social obligations are crucial to the survival of these foraging

groups, who still live today as all people did until the advent of agriculture just a few thousand years ago (a blink of an eye in evolutionary terms). And because these relationships promote social cohesion, opting out can be problematic. Anthropologist Philippe Erikson, who studied the Matis people of the upper Amazon, reports, "Extramarital sex is not only widely practiced and usually tolerated, in many respects, it also appears mandatory." If a Matis refuses too many sexual advances, he or she risks being labeled "stingy of one's genitals" in a kind of mirror reflection of our internet age's phenomenon of slut shaming. The isolating nuclear family is a thoroughly modern contrivance, as is our grim insistence that sexual monogamy is an essential part of any authentic expression of love.

Because humans share a highly social sexuality along with chimps and bonobos—with whom we also share more

than 98 percent of our DNA—it's very likely that all three species have been randy, promiscuous apes since before they originated. We're just the only ones who are "evolved" enough to try denying it. We need to take a step back and begin again with a clear, scientifically accurate sense of what kind of animal *Homo sapiens* is—taboos and religious hypocrisies be damned. Our sexual omnivorousness is as self-evident as our dietary omnivorousness, and monogamy comes to us about as naturally as vegetarianism. Now, one may decide to forgo meat. Many of us do, and for good reason. But just because you've decided to give it up, don't think that bacon's going to stop smelling good.

TEXT BY CHRISTOPHER RYAN
ARTWORK BY MARK MULRONEY

Christopher Ryan is co-author of *Sex at Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What It Means for Modern Relationships*. His co-author, Cacilda Jethá, is his wife.





Swiss photographer Hans Feurer takes fashionable artifice to the beach in this perverse trip into...



PHOTOGRAPHY BY HANS FEURER

Nature







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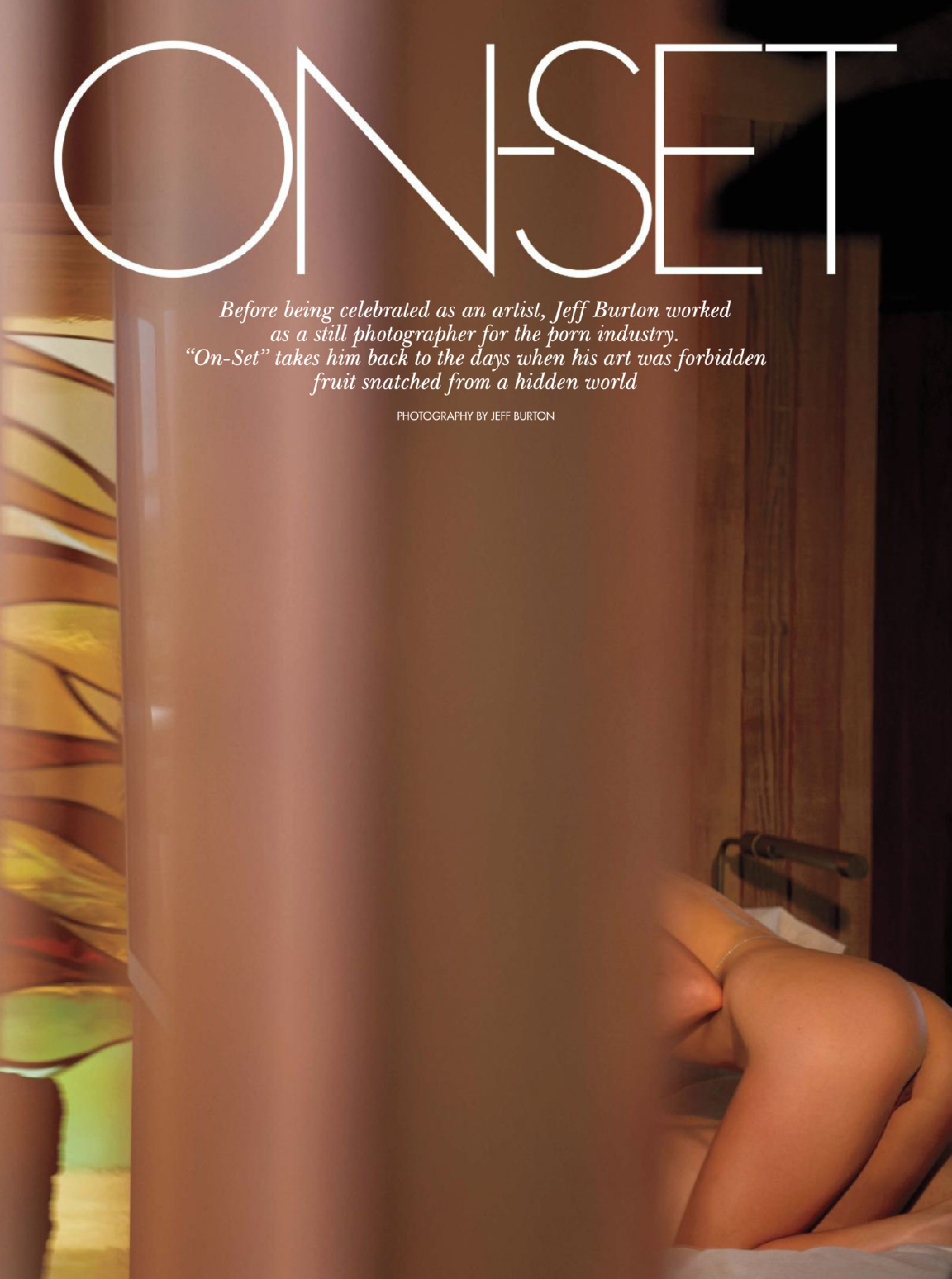




ONSET

*Before being celebrated as an artist, Jeff Burton worked
as a still photographer for the porn industry.
“On-Set” takes him back to the days when his art was forbidden
fruit snatched from a hidden world*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF BURTON







STYLING BY MARYAM MALAKPOUR AT CLM; HAIR BY TUAN ANH TRAN AT FRANK REPS; MAKEUP BY DARLENE JACOBS AT FRANK REPS; PROP STYLING BY ROBERT SUMRELL AT WALTER SCHUPPER MANAGEMENT; MODELS: BRYNN, ERIKA, SCARLETT, TAMZIN, BENJAMIN; KELLEY, BRANDON AND JOHN AT Q MANAGEMENT.













Pleasure

The pharmaceutical industry has been almost exclusively focused on the management of pain and depression. But what happened to chemical hedonism?

Modern medicine has neglected pleasure. With major depressive disorder being the leading cause of disability in the United States for people between the ages of 15 and 44, there is an urgent need to treat depression and, arguably, a somewhat less urgent need to better the lives of already well people. How could the medicinal chemist think of something so gauche as pleasure in a world plagued by suicidality and unremitting despair? And aside from the need to triage affective disorders, there is the unpleasant fact that pleasure, for all its apparent virtues, has a long track record of creating problems. The pleasure of euphoriant drugs can result in habituation and dependence, the pleasure of food in obesity, the pleasure of money in greed and the pleasure of sex in virtually every type of mess known to man. Of these I am most interested in drugs, for the specific reason that they induce pleasure more reliably than almost anything else in life, which otherwise provides no guarantee of joy or satisfaction. Academic, professional and artistic achievement may elicit nothing more than a moment of somber self-reflection, pangs of perfectionist anxiety or the sensation that more could have been done and better. This, however, is not the case with methamphetamine.

Scientists have long understood euphoriant drugs as indispensable tools for exploring the neurological wells of pleasure that exist in our brains. A researcher can reward a mouse with a food pellet or a sucrose solution, but these treats pale in comparison to the glow produced by certain drugs, which, assuming they are sufficiently reinforcing, the mouse will choose over food every time. The point of these scientific investigations is not to create new drugs that will promote human pleasure—though there are exceptions that I'll get to in a minute—but to research the mechanisms of addiction and the nature of dopamine, the mind's chemical of reward. It's pure serendipity that many illegal and semilegal euphoriant drugs were the accidental products of orthodox scientific experiments. LSD was the result of efforts to produce drugs that would increase blood circulation in the elderly.

Amphetamine was discovered by Gordon Alles in the course of investigating nasal decongestants. Methaqualone (commonly known as Quaalude) was synthesized in India as a prospective antimalarial treatment. Viagra was initially trialed as a treatment for angina pectoris. The list goes on and on. But outside of therapies aimed at treating various forms of sexual dysfunction, there are no pharmaceuticals intended primarily to induce pleasure. At the same time, billions of dollars are spent annually on the development of drugs that *prevent* pleasure in order to assist addicts. Antabuse, naltrexone, methadone, Chantix—these are all pharmaceutical efforts to attenuate the pleasure humans derive from the already abundant but ever-growing array of euphoriant drugs.

It would seem that an obvious strategy would be to simply give pleasure-inducing drugs to the depressed people who might benefit from them most. But the aim of pharmaceutical treatments for depression has rarely been to cause joy (clinically, euphoria is sometimes even classified as an "adverse effect") but to help the patient find and remain on the narrow isthmus between happiness and sadness. A 1986 trial employing 15-milligram intravenous doses of methamphetamine found it to be a superbly effective antidepressant in almost half of all female patients tested, though it isn't a drug that most would even consider a realistic therapeutic intervention for depressed patients. (It is, however, currently approved for the treatment of both ADHD and obesity.) Methamphetamine users have earned a reputation for tending to overshoot the mark when left to their own devices, choosing feelings of manic, transcendent euphoria over euthymia (a nice, general positivity) and increased productivity, perhaps limiting the scope of methamphetamine's pharmaceutical application. Meth addicts have given meth a bad name.

During routine investigations of novel tricyclics, then the most prominent class of antidepressants, chemists at the French pharmaceutical company Servier discovered a new drug that exerted not only an antidepressant but also a pronounced stimulant effect. They called it amineptine. Mice given the drug exhibited increased locomotion and slept less when injected with barbiturates. In the 1970s, amineptine was introduced as a pharmaceutical antidepressant in Europe to much fanfare. Its stimulating effects rapidly jolted lethargic depressives out of their malaise and allowed them to resume normal lives without the multiweek therapeutic lag present in other pharmaceutical solutions. And while other antidepressants resulted in reduced libido, amineptine actually induced spontaneous orgasms in many females who consumed it—taking that dangerous next step, beyond treating depression, into the checkered realm

of pleasure. It's not surprising that some patients began to take large doses of the drug in order to revel in the high it produced. Medical case reports began to emerge, and among the heaviest users amineptine was found to produce cystic acne on the face, earlobes and genitals with such severity that one dermatologist characterized the addicts' appearance as "monstrous." A governmental warning was issued and amineptine was summarily withdrawn from the international pharmaceutical market, leaving a lacuna in the synapses of many responsible users who had benefited from the drug.

Servier responded by replacing amineptine with an antidepressant it hoped would have lower abuse potential. It was named tianeptine, and it behaved more like an opioid, inhibiting the pain response in mice whose tails were singed on hot plates and the coughing of guinea pigs sprayed with citric acid. But, like amineptine, tianeptine had a fast onset and did not interfere with sexual functioning. Slowly, the reports of addiction to its more narcotic effects began to trickle in; a female user in Turkey worked her way up to ingesting 150 12.5-milligram tianeptine tablets each day. Russian and Armenian tianeptine addicts preferred to inject the sugarcoated pills to increase the high, sometimes resulting in severe vascular damage that necessitated the amputation of limbs. Now tianeptine is a controlled substance in those countries. In other countries it's banned entirely. But it should be noted that the abuse of these substances occurred only in a minority of users. The stories of both drugs, to my mind, serve as reminders that the medical establishment believes that pleasure has no place in the treatment of depression.

Popular science is caught up in a juggling act—a state of constant media manipulation—that revolves around the chemicals in our brains. Dopamine is doubtlessly a neurotransmitter of major importance, and it plays a crucial role in reinforcing certain behavioral patterns. But to simply classify it as a "pleasure chemical" betrays the versatile role it plays in nature, where it is involved just as much in encoding aversion, movement, lactation and vomiting as it is in facilitating bliss. Serotonin, the neurochemical target of an immensely lucrative series of pharmaceutical antidepressants such as Prozac, is widely called the "happy chemical"—a characterization based on the simplistic idea that elevating serotonin levels in the brain is all that is required to alleviate depression. But it has yet to be definitively proved that low levels of serotonin in the brain are a cause of depression. The association between serotonin and mood disorders remains poorly understood. Any therapeutic effect attributed to SSRI antidepressants could instead be the result of far more complex

effects—the generation of new neurons in the hippocampus, for example. Our old friend tianeptine actually *decreases* the amount of serotonin available in neural synapses, yet it exerts a therapeutic effect that is every bit as potent—and apparently more enjoyable—than today’s most popular antidepressants. Oxytocin, often called the “love hormone,” is involved in parent-child bonding and appears to be released as an indirect result of postorgasmic surges in the hormone prolactin, but it is just as much involved in fostering aggression toward outsiders not present during the moments of oxytocin release. Then there are the endorphins, which were once thought to cause runner’s high, a feeling now thought to be the product of endocannabinoids—chemicals that originate inside us and activate the same receptors as cannabis. But despite their great potential for pleasure, endocannabinoids are relegated to the dustpan of biogenic pleasure chemicals. A pharmaceutical disaster called rimonabant, an appetite suppressant that blocked the activity of endogenous cannabinoids, induced psychosis and suicidal depression in many users.

So the intentional design of pleasure-inducing drugs is a rare occasion indeed. The scientists who have dedicated their lives to the creation of chemicals that have the sole purpose of inducing good feelings can be counted on a single hand. Most notable among them is Alexander Shulgin, one of MDMA’s earliest proponents as well as the inventor of more than 100 novel psychedelics. But the lesson Shulgin learned from his pursuit of chemicals that provide consumers with a sense of transcendent euphoria was a difficult one; there was certainly money to be made from his inventions, which currently support a multimillion-dollar black- and gray-market industry, but the funds did not come back to him. He is currently struggling to pay his medical bills as his career comes to an end. Meanwhile, the manufacturers of dubiously effective yet non-abusable SSRI antidepressants luxuriate in vast pyramids of pharmaceutical wealth.

The avant-garde of intelligent recreational drug design exists in New Zealand in the form of a small pharmaceutical company called Stargate International. It’s run by an entrepreneur named Matt Bowden, who has introduced numerous psychoactive drugs that have the explicit purpose of fostering human pleasure. In fact, his company possesses the world’s only commercial laboratory operating aboveground in an effort to design new recreational drugs for mass distribution.

And let’s not forget transhumanists like David Pearce, an Oxford-trained philosopher who has spent his life in the noble search for eternal unremitting bliss. He refers to his work as “paradise engineering” and speaks of “the hedonistic

imperative.” Brushing away the quibbles of those who suggest pleasure can be felt only in contrast to the counterweight of pain, Pearce believes that the pain caused by disorders like depression will one day be considered as preventable and unnecessary as the pain one would experience while being operated on without anesthesia. (The two may even converge in the surgical anesthetic ketamine, a.k.a. Special K, which acts as a potent antidepressant.)

While many raise the puritanical objection that the pleasure felt as a result of these drugs is somehow false or artificial, the research of neuroscientist Matthew Baggott on MDMA has actually found the opposite: One of the defining features of MDMA’s effect is a feeling of *increased* authenticity. And Pearce’s work has gone past mere speculation. He has successfully

found a way to alleviate his own depression with a unique combination of the methamphetamine derivative selegiline and amineptine (a personal supply of which he secured after its pharmaceutical banishment). While it’s unclear whether the future of human pleasure will hinge on the administration of small molecules like amineptine or more invasive means like deep brain stimulation, we should feel encouraged by the fact that we’ve already reached a place where pure euphoria can be reliably induced by chemicals. The question will soon become whether we can accept—and withstand—readily available pleasure.

TEXT BY HAMILTON MORRIS
ARTWORK BY JOHN BALDESSARI

Brain/Cloud
(With Seascape and Palm Tree), 2009.
Courtesy of John Baldessari/Counter Editions.



HUMAN SEXUALITY IS SO COMPLICATED!

ONE LAST RIDE... WE'D ALREADY BROKEN UP—WE BOTH HAD NEW LOVERS.... SHE 'D COME TO SEE ME ABOUT SOME BUSINESS AT MY FRIEND'S PLACE IN THE CITY... SHE LOOKED GREAT... I WAS STILL VERY ATTRACTED TO HER. WE HAD A FRIENDLY VISIT AND SHE GOT UP TO LEAVE. I COULDN'T LET HER GO JUST LIKE THAT.

I BLURTED OUT, "HOW 'BOUT LETTING ME HAVE ONE LAST RIDE ON YER BUTT BEFORE YOU GO!" "OH, ALRIGHT," SHE SAID, MATTER-OF-FACTLY, AND PERMITTED ME TO MARCH HER INTO THE LIVING ROOM, LOOKING AS THOUGH I WAS ESCORTING HER INTO A FINE RESTAURANT... BUT NO! INSTEAD, HER PHENOMENAL ASS WAS GOING TO BE PUT TO GOOD USE! I THRILLED WITH ANTICIPATION AS HER HEELS KLUNKED LOUDLY ON THE FLOOR! SHE GOT DOWN ON HER STOMACH ON THE LIVINGROOM CARPET, AND I IMMEDIATELY PLUMPED DOWN ASTRIDE OF HER RUMP, MARVELING AT THE BUOYANCY, HOW HIGH UP IT STOOD FROM THE REST OF HER, AND THEN SHE BEGAN FLEXING IT! OH MY GOD! THE POWER IN THAT THING! THE MUSCULATURE! OH SIGH!



REPRODUCTIVE WRONGS

AS HARD-FOUGHT RIGHTS GET ROLLED BACK, PHILOSOPHER SIMON CRITCHLEY AND PSYCHOANALYST JAMIESON WEBSTER OFFER A PARADOXICAL PRESCRIPTION FOR A (MISGUIDED) LIFE

1

Cheaper than condoms and easier than abstinence, impotence is the best method of contraception.

2

Internet pornography is the second-best form of contraception. It ensures that none of your seminal juices, wasting away in clumps of tissue, will fertilize any embryo.

3

The great civilizational advance of the rich north Atlantic democracies is to have made reproduction effectively impossible, which is evidenced in ever-declining birth rates (even for the contraception-hating lotharios of Italy). Nobody, apart from the mega-rich and the working poor, can imagine having children anymore.

4

The growing prevalence of eating disorders among young women in the West has the unacknowledged though intended consequence of sterility, adding to the ever-declining birthrates. The fixation on androgynous pre-pubescent bodies, exercise, low caloric intake—i.e., total control over one's body—also leads to the draining of the libido. And is anything more obsessional than the idea of birth control and family planning?

5

Hard bodies do not equal hard cocks. Witness Schwarzenegger, comparing the euphoric pump of lifting weights to sex: "I'm coming day and night!" So, then, why ever *actually* come?

6

Don't you sometimes feel nostalgia for good old-fashioned venereal diseases, like syphilis, which our Elizabethan forebears would treat with leeches and long days in what they called the "sweating-tub"? At least in having sex, one risked something. But the clarity of classic STDs has given way to a much more subtle low-level pandemic of viruses (like the omnipresent HPV, which is like the ether itself) and containable disorders. Sex becomes hygiene. It also becomes a source of fear, which is an excellent contraceptive aid.

7

In a recent study on men's and women's excitement in relation to viewing pornography (reading sexual excitement through brain waves and a device placed on his penis and in her vagina) the expected result of women's rapidly declining interest to that of men, on all accounts, was detailed. However, what did surprise the scientific researchers was that if you spliced the pornography with literally anything—pictures of flowers, cars, gay sex, clips of President Obama, daytime television, cats jumping off fences, even nothing more than a gap—you could keep her excitement going, and for much longer than that of men. *Way longer. Hmm.*

8

The paradox of sexual liberation is that when everything is possible, nothing is possible. When we are liberated from all those dreary old bourgeois repressive constraints, we are suddenly disoriented and unable to act. The hidden consequence of sexual freedom is impotence. With magazines like *PLAYBOY* in our hands (or, better, in our hand), generations of men have quite literally felt themselves to be the quintessential anti-Victorians who willfully and joyfully gaze at women's naked bodies. But the truth is, it is only repression that keeps desire alive. A woman in a burka or concealed by a veil is infinitely more sexy than the plastic perfection of a nude model. In a world obsessed with contraception (namely, placing barriers against anything and everything), perhaps the best barrier is no barrier. In which case, the battle cry of right-wing sexual prudes might well be "Long live the Centerfold!"

9

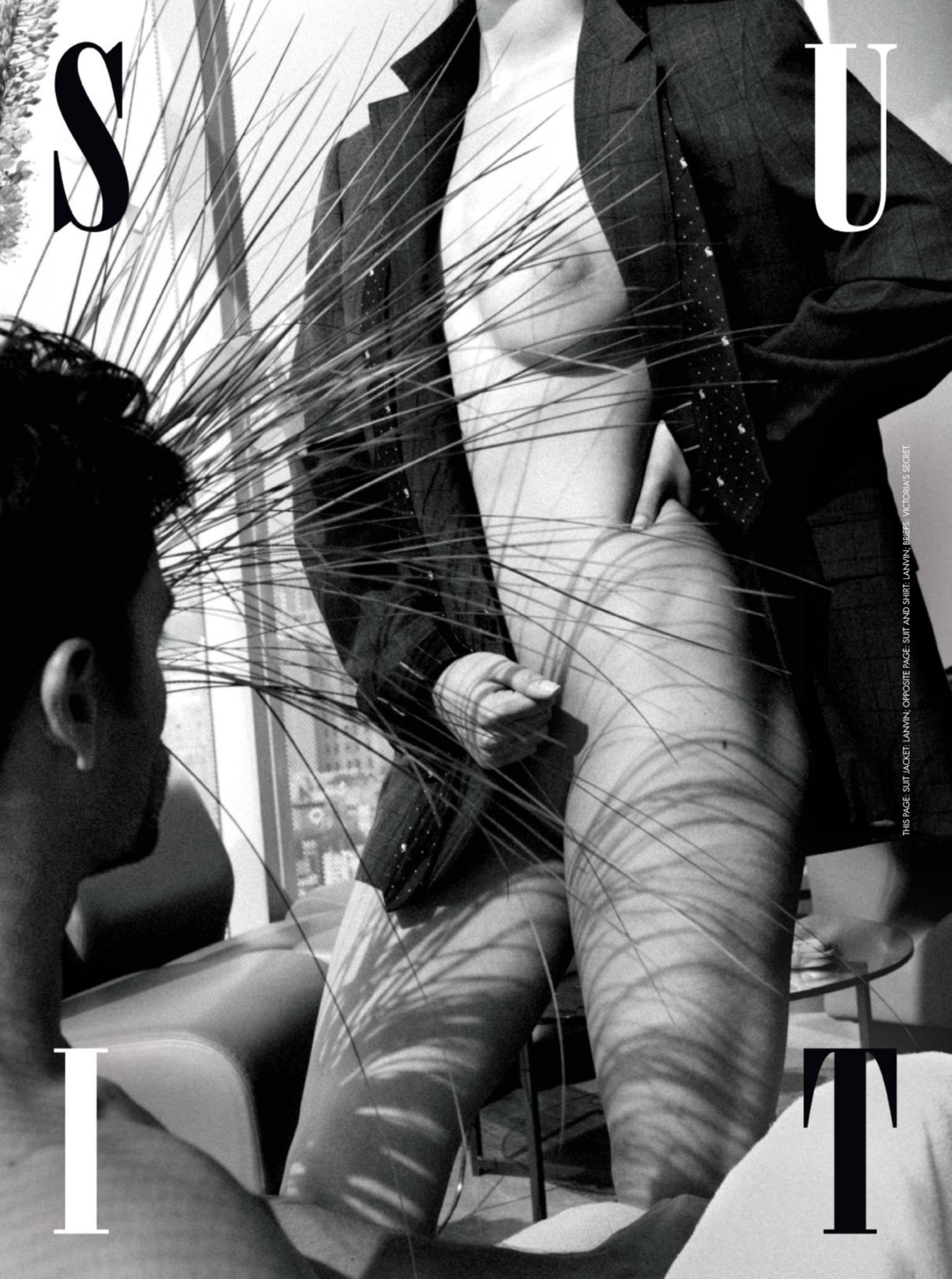
Should you have a couple of hours free on a wet Wednesday afternoon, we encourage you to peruse the pamphlets from all across the U.S. aimed at educating teenagers about the dangers of sex, teen pregnancy, sexual assault, STDs and the rest. "Are you ready to have sex?" proclaims one. Apparently one must be able to assent to *all* of the following:

- (i) I am comfortable using proper terms such as *penis, vagina, vulva, clitoris, testicles*, etc. without shame or embarrassment.
- (ii) If our birth control fails, I have enough money for emergency contraception or enough money to have a baby.
- (iii) I am comfortable talking to my doctor about my sexual health.
- (iv) I am comfortable talking openly to my partner about my feelings.
- (v) I know my body well enough to tell if I have an infection.
- (vi) Sex is the right thing for both of us.

One wonders exactly what the *etc.* in (i) refers to. And the odd monetary calculation in (ii) is rather peculiar: abortion or baby? As for (iii), who exactly is comfortable talking with doctors? Then (iv) and (v) require a genuinely bewildering degree of psychological and physiological self-awareness. And finally, (vi): When is sex ever the right thing to do? It's the wrong thing; that's the point. Isn't this the very definition of reproductive wrong? Or are we wrong?

10

But two wrongs do not make a right, so please don't get us wrong. All we are arguing for is that in the disorienting wasteland that is contemporary sexuality we might be able to revive some genuine eroticism and the experience of radical longing and yearning that fuels it—by embracing the wrong. Love is not knowledge. Eros is that hot, limbo-loosening power, what the Greek poet Sappho described as "Sweat pours down me, I shake all over, I go pale as green grass. I'm that close to being dead." What could be simpler?



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THIS PAGE: SUIT JACKET: LANVIN; OPPOSITE PAGE: SUIT AND SHIRT: LANVIN; BRIEFS: VICTORIA'S SECRET.



*Ralph Gibson uncovers
the architectural allure of the
tailored suit*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RALPH GIBSON

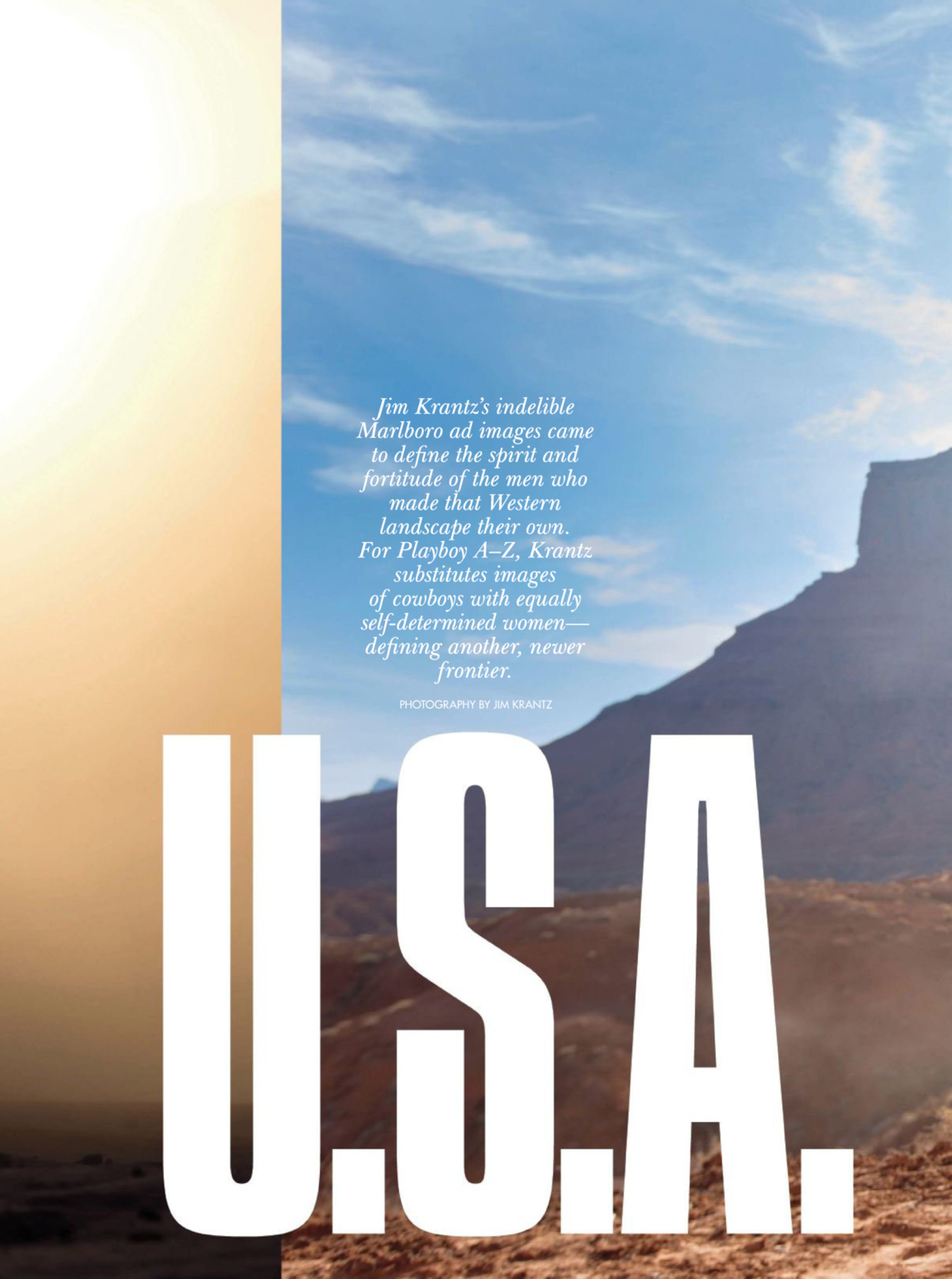


THIS PAGE: SUIT AND SHIRT: ALEXANDER MCQUEEN; OPPOSITE PAGE: DRESS SHOE: PRADA; PUMP: GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI; SOCK AND STOCKING: WOLFORD; STYLING BY JENNY CAPTAIN AT BRYDGES MACKINNEY; HAIR BY MARCO SANTINI AT THE WALL GROUP;
MAKEUP BY STEVIE HUYNH AT D+V MANAGEMENT; MANICURE BY ROSEANN SINGLETON AT ART DEPARTMENT; MODELS: MARYKATE AT MIX MODEL MANAGEMENT, ALEXIS AT Q MANAGEMENT, RYAN AT IMG; LOCATION: THE STANDARD, EAST VILLAGE.









*Jim Krantz's indelible
Marlboro ad images came
to define the spirit and
fortitude of the men who
made that Western
landscape their own.
For Playboy A–Z, Krantz
substitutes images
of cowboys with equally
self-determined women—
defining another, newer
frontier.*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM KRANTZ

U.S.A.





STYLING BY OLYMPIA SCARRY; HAIR BY ROB TALTY AT THE MAGNET AGENCY USING RENÉ FURTERER; MAKEUP BY DANIEL MARTIN AT THE WALL GROUP; MODELS: EUGENA AT MAJOR MODEL MANAGEMENT NEW YORK AND SHERINA; PRODUCTION BY NATIVE PICTURES.



















Virtual

The (surprisingly) ancient roots of virtual sex, as seen by novelist Will Self

To paraphrase Jimi Hendrix's memorable acid-fueled trope: I stand up next to a virtual mountain...and chop it down with the edge of my penis. It occurs to me that in case you didn't catch it the first time I'd better, Hendrix-style, say it again: I stand up next to a virtual mountain...and chop it down with the edge of my penis. Now, some of you out there will be only too ready to complete the verse for me with the assertion that, *mutatis mutandis*, I must be a voodoo child (or even "chile"), so bewitched am I by the way the new media have made available to the solitary onanist such a vast plurality of heaving flesh. But I say "Balls!"—being of the English persuasion—for hasn't the vast majority of sexual activity, inasmuch as it can be quantified at all, always been virtual?

For every real glimpse of heaving flesh *au naturel* there have, since time out of mind, been many thousands of artificially paradisiacal ones constructed in the eye of the nonbeholder; for each whiff of the perfumes that mask—and mingle—with the odors of our desiderata, our lizard brains have always summoned up an olfactory superabundance so that we may flare our nostrils as we slumber in the seclusion of our subterranean nests. For touch and taste it's the same: When it comes to sexual imagining, the most bottom-feeding and pedestrian among us are transformed into deep-chested Kenyans running tirelessly for mile upon mile across the eroticized uplands.

Of course, I'm not about to deny the enormous impact the internet has had on certain aspects of both our social existence and our imaginative lives—to do so would be worse than reactionary; it'd be like struggling into a temple garment of the mind, and as I believe I've implied above, I'm keener on LSD than on the LDS. The Arab Spring has transmogrified into a long, hot summer of droning predation—and that summer has faded into a shivering Syrian winter. Now we have another long, hot summer, and many seem to feel that this accelerating gyre of political events must have something to do with the new media—that the web, girlding the earth, has been yanked so hard, Ceres starts up. Maybe—maybe not, but

there's a difference between a change in pace and a direct change. If the new media have a message, it's simply: Buy More New Media. So while we may find ourselves paying more to view, no one has been able to convince me that the fundamental terms of our most passionate endearment have been altered. And let's recall that while this may seem to be *all* about me—since it's my penis up against that virtual mountain—most men, in my experience, regard their man-or-mousehood as the measure of all things.

If there's one certainty beyond our mortality and the fiscal question, it's that the perverse—like the poor—will always be with us. Sacher-Masoch was a near-contemporary of Freud's, and the repression cooker that was Viennese sexual life constrained within the Ringstrasse has long since exploded, splattering successive generations with its glutinous debris of symptoms and interpretations—yet just as not many of us really experience pain as pleasure, so a vanishingly small number find the idea of suiting up in a giant oven mitt and being caressed by another... giant oven mitt remotely arousing. If you're like me—and if you've read this far, I think it's safe to assume you are—your most commonly entertained sexual fantasy is probably having sex.

By "having sex" I don't mean you are confined to a stereotypical repertoire of positions, partners or practices—far from it—but only that what you commonly while away your time in suited meetings imagining is having sex with another living, breathing, emphatically sentient and responsive human being—not some cyber zombie of a *Second Life* avatar. And since we've been hardwired to feel this way by a selection process that's been going on ever since Mitochondrial Eve waved goodbye to her hairy and pungent ape consort across the steadily widening gulf of the Rift Valley, I see no reason to believe it's going to change anytime soon.

Each successive generation gives birth to its own panicky anxiety about the virtualization of the sexual act. I recall, as a young man, going to see Wim Wenders's movie *Paris, Texas*, in which a radiant Nastassja Kinski funnels her dewy beauty down the line of a telephone-sex parlor—a few years later "Buffalo" Bill Clinton was getting his rocks off from reading excerpts from Nicholson Baker's telephone-sex novel *Vox*, which was given to him by a certain intern. The somewhat viscid circularity of this situation—telephone-sex novel incorporated into telephone sex—shouldn't distract us from the constants: Telephone sex has dried and blown away, to be replaced by live-chat interactions on the web; what remains, of course, is the novel and sex itself. Go back another 20 years and it was the movies and photography that were the great objectifiers: taking bodies—almost entirely female ones—and reducing them to so much less than the

sum of their erogenous zones. Retire—in good order—a further couple of decades, and certain printed words are held to be shibboleths too damaging to be printed, lest their mutterers find themselves on a one-way trip to Sodom with a refreshment stop at Gomorrah.

I would say fuck that if this weren't precisely what we're trying to get away from here. Because, let's face the facts: It's the puritanical and the repressed who've always been the most filthy-minded among us, right back to that miserable moment when a fig leaf was tacked on to Adam's penis so he could no longer use it to measure anything at all and, instead, had to rely on an idea of a dick. Still, it should be no surprise that as technological means of reproduction become more and more sophisticated, the proportion of the perverse who—in the psychoanalytic jargon—negatively cathect with these objects increases. I write this strange lexical entry in the week that the British police agency charged with tracking down pedophiles involved in the web-based dissemination of images of child sexual abuse announced that it is targeting some 50,000 potential suspects. Ach! How, upon hearing this baleful news, one longs for the innocent era before the web, when child sexual abuse was conducted exclusively up close and personal by men in positions of trust and authority—teachers, priests, scout leaders, politicians and the like.

Enfin, let us stand together up against that virtual mountain and chop it down with the length of our penises, our breasts and our clitorises—and while we're at it, let us bury it in the depths of our vaginas and crush it between our own entirely real thighs. Just as the male sexual impulse tends, entirely healthily, to superabundance, so will imagery of all sorts ever be subjected to the same multiplier. I've no doubt that within a half century there will be computer programs that allow their users to experience a believable simulation of the act of love—believable, that is, for those whose imaginations are painfully straitjacketed by inhibition, inexperience, religiosity or all three. For the rest of us, virtual sex will be there—we may even, from time to time, dip our wicks in its pixels—but just as young men need to be educated emotionally to understand that movies and pictures are at best a substitute for, or a temporary adjunct to, the infinitely creative organ that lies between their own jug ears, so they must be steered out of the shadow play of their smelly little bedrooms and into the sunny uplands of someone else's.

As for poor Jimi, I always thought it a strange quirk of the virtual that one of his final communications with the world was an answering-machine message—and this was in 1970! Sex, death and technology, see—Freud would've approved.

TEXT BY WILL SELF



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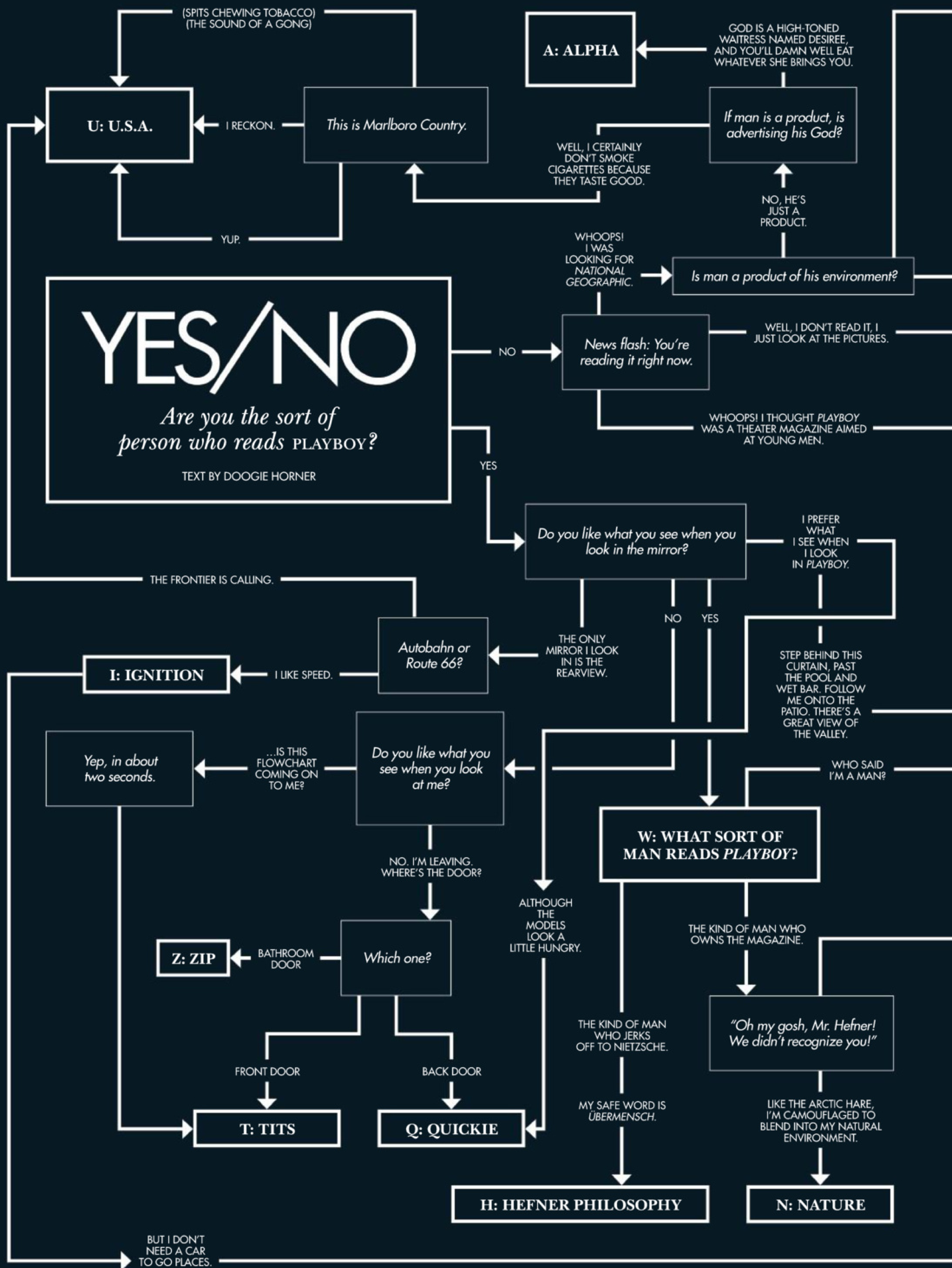
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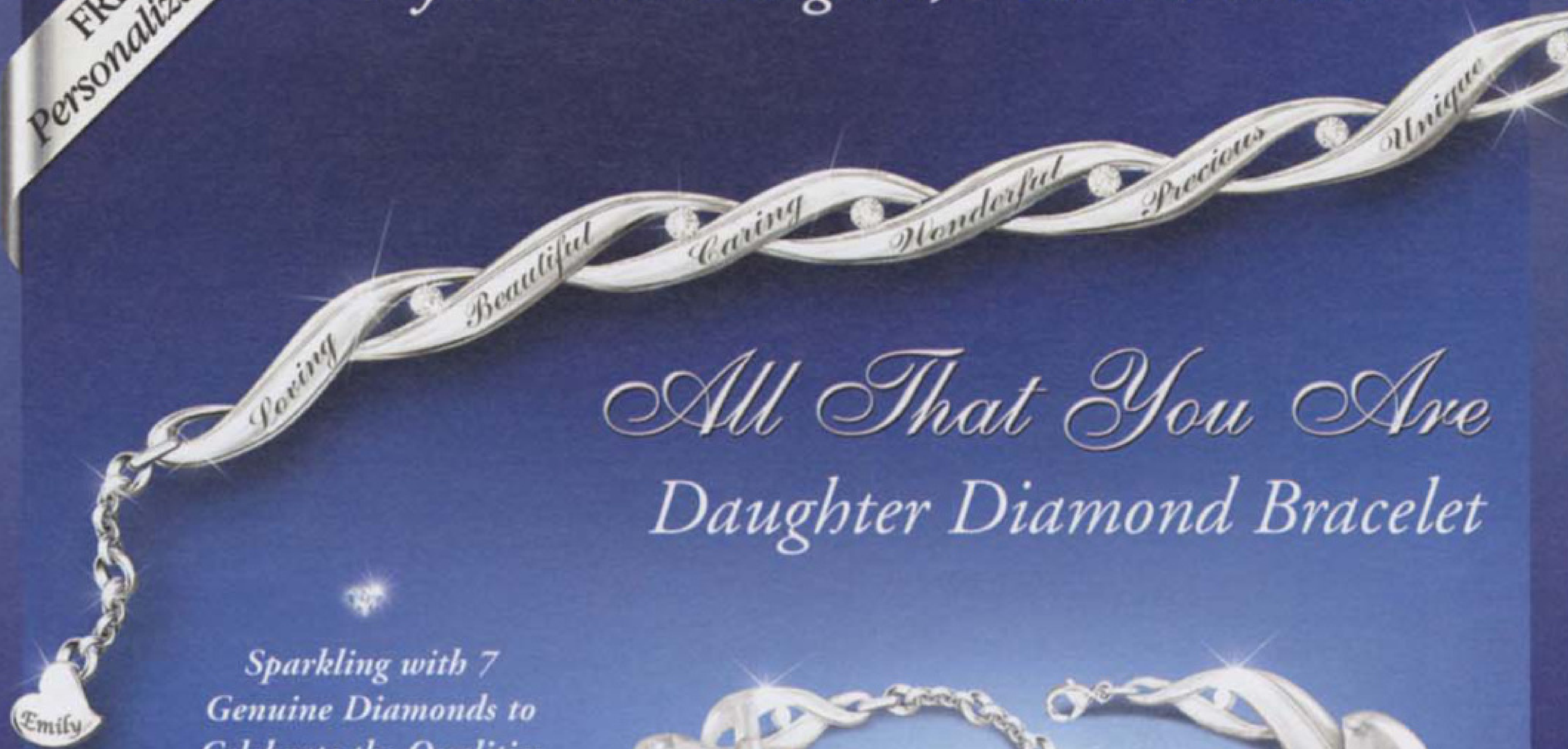
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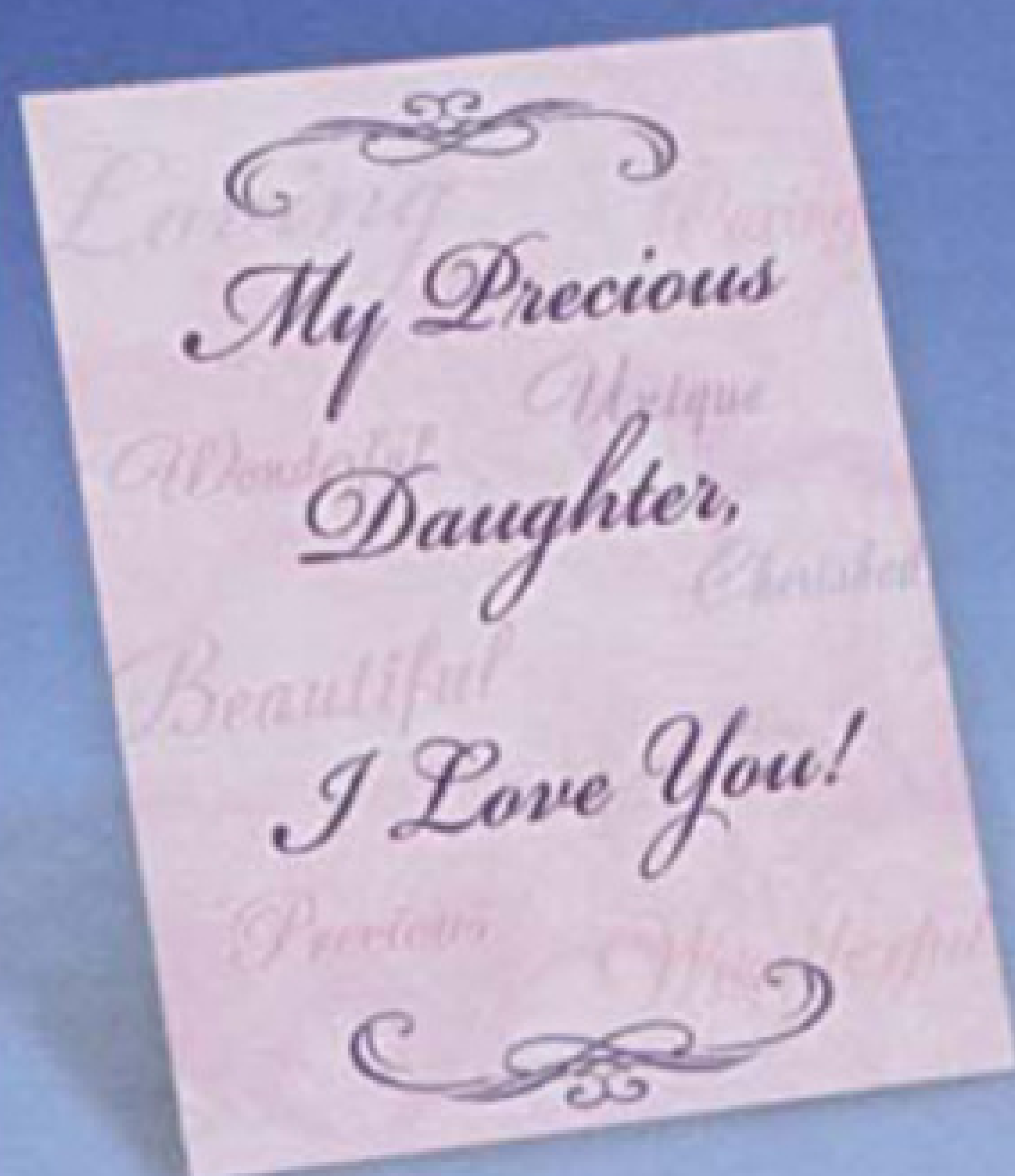
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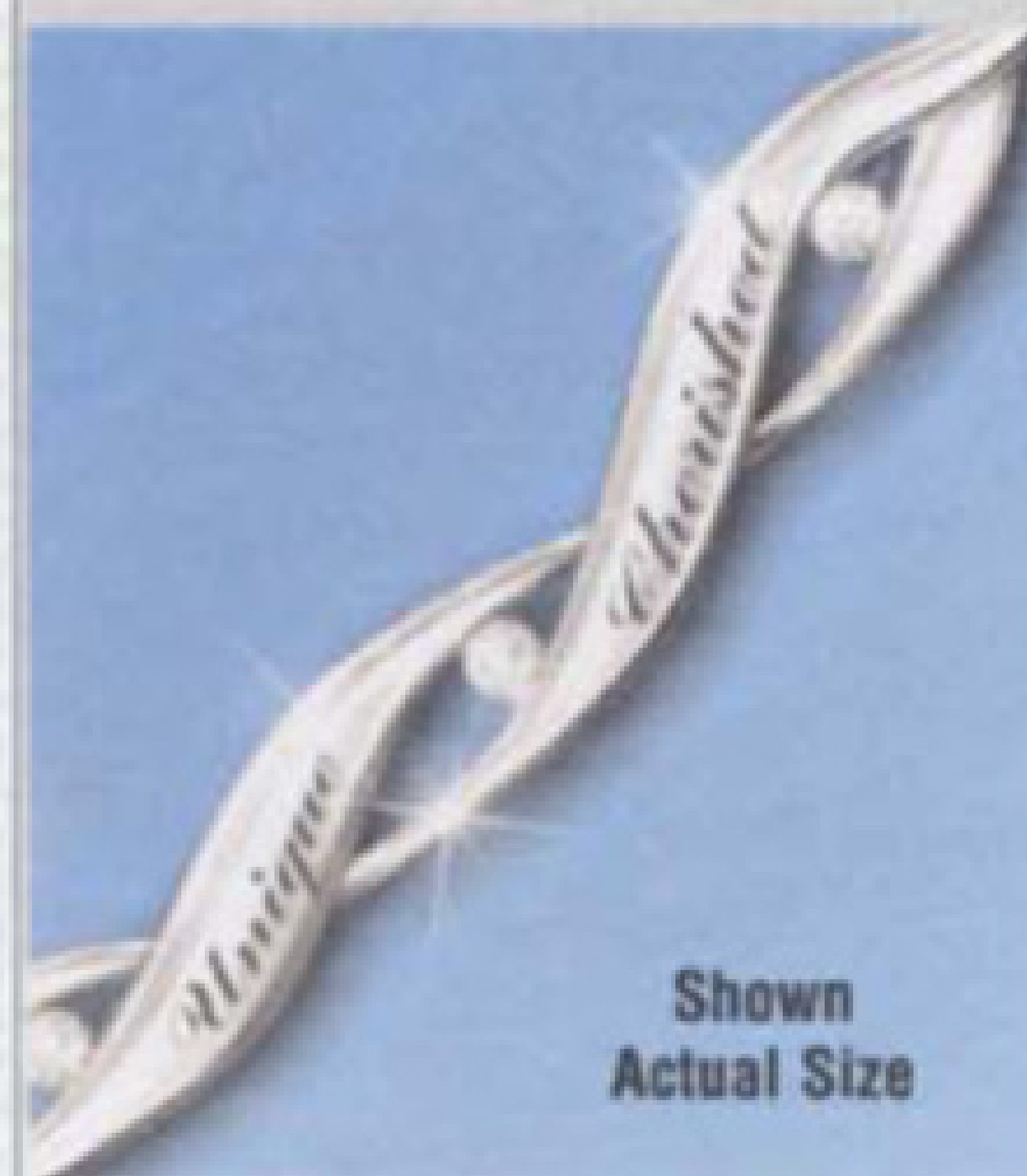
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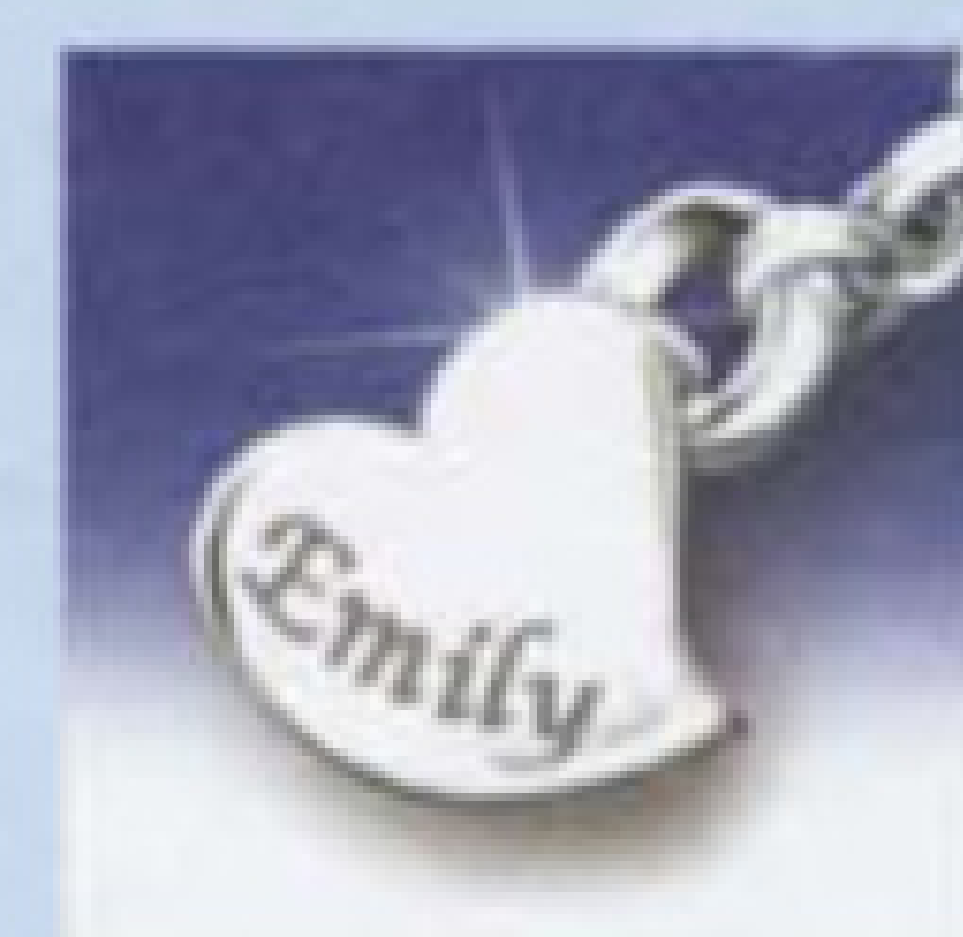
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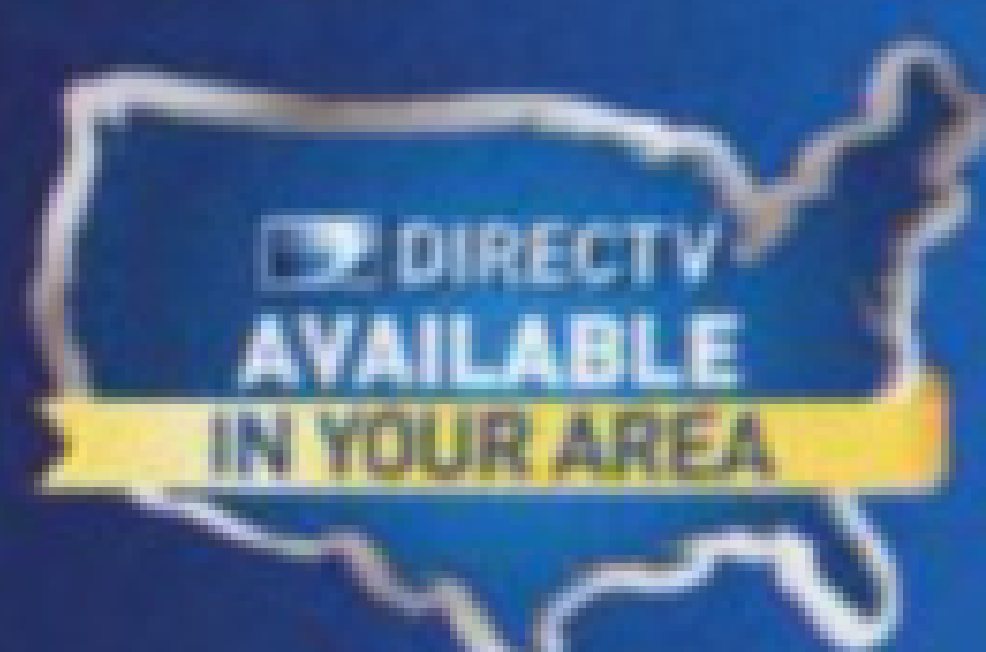
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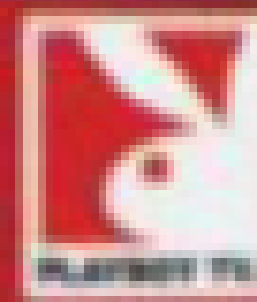
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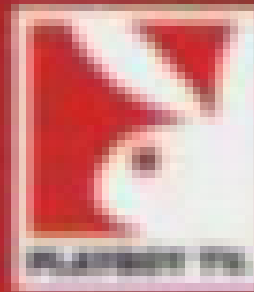
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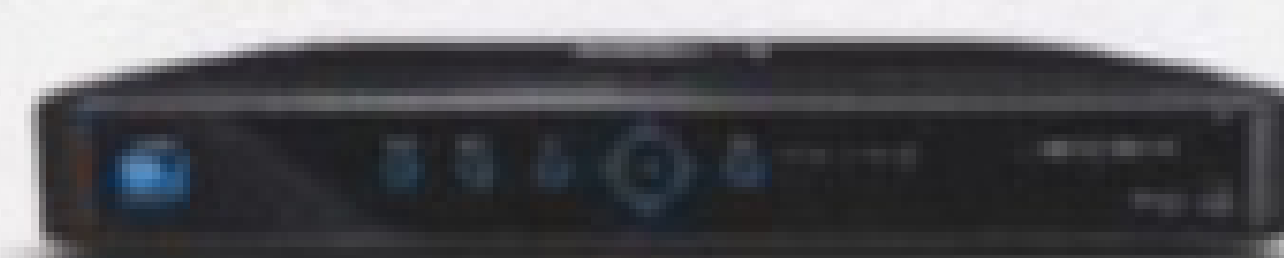
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